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VIKING SHIP, USED FOR BURIAL (GOKSTAD, NORWAY).

(Length of keel, 60 feet; total length, 75 feet; broadest part, 15½ feet; depth from the upper part of bulwark to bottom of keel, 3' [illegible])

Judging from the number of holes seen, which were about 18 inches below the gunwale, it carried sixteen oars, and was consequ[illegible]
seater. Its preservation is due to the blue clay in which it was partly embedded, the upper part being eaten away owing to [illegible]
mixed with sand, thus allowing the rain and air to penetrate. It is entirely of oak, clinker built, calked with cows' hair spun i[illegible] being
of cord.

The Viking Age

THE ASIATIC LIBRARY

The Early History
manners, and Customs of the Ancestors
of the English-speaking Nations.

illustrated from
The Antiquities discovered in mounds
Cairns and Bogs, as well as from the
ancient Sagas and Eddas.

By
Paul B. Du Chaillu
author of "Exploration in Equatorial Africa"
"Land of midnight Sun" etc.

with 1366 illustrations and maps

In Two Volumes - Vol. I

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PREFACE.

WHILE studying the progress made in the colonisation of different parts of the world by European nations, I have often asked myself the following questions:—

How is it that over every region of the globe the spread of the English-speaking people and of their language far exceeds that of all the other European nations combined?

Why is it that, wherever the English-speaking people have settled, or are at this day found, even in small numbers, they are far more energetic, daring, adventurous, and prosperous, and understand the art of self-government and of ruling alien peoples far better than other colonising nations?

Whence do the English-speaking communities derive the remarkable energy they possess; for the people of Britain when invaded by the Romans did not show any such quality?

What are the causes which have made the English such a pre-eminently seafaring people? for without such a characteristic they could not have been the founders of so many states and colonies speaking the English tongue!

In studying the history of the world we find that all the nations which have risen to high power and widespread dominion have been founded by men endowed with great, I may say terrible, energy; extreme bravery and the love of conquest being the most prominent traits of their character. The mighty sword with all its evils has thus far always proved a great engine of civilisation.

To get a satisfactory answer to the above questions we must go far back, and study the history of the race who settled in Britain during and after the Roman occupation. We

shall thus find why their descendants are to-day so brave, successful, energetic and prosperous in the lands which they have colonised; and why they are so pre-eminently skilled in the art of self-government.

We find that a long stretch of coast is not sufficient, though necessary, to make the population of a country a seafaring nation. When the Romans invaded Britain, the Brits had no fleet to oppose them. We do not until a later period meet with that love of the sea which is so characteristically English:—not before the gradual absorption of the earlier inhabitants by a blue-eyed and yellow-haired seafaring people who succeeded in planting themselves and their language in the country.

To the numerous warlike and ocean-loving tribes of the North, the ancestors of the English-speaking people, we must look for the transformation that took place in Britain. In their descendants we recognise to this day many of the very same traits of character which these old Northmen possessed, as will be seen on the perusal of this work.

Britain, after a continuous immigration which lasted several hundred years, became the most powerful colony of the Northern tribes, several of the chiefs of the latter claiming to own a great part of England in the seventh and eighth centuries. At last the time came when the land of the emigrants waxed more powerful, more populous than the mother-country, and asserted her independence; and to-day the people of England, as they look over the broad Atlantic, may discern a similar process which is taking place in the New World.

The impartial mind which rises above the prejudice of nationality must acknowledge that no country will leave a more glorious impress upon the history of the world than England. Her work cannot be undone; should she to-day sink beneath the seas which bathe her shores, her record will for ever stand brilliantly illuminated on the page of history. The great states which she has founded, which have inherited her tongue, and which are destined to play a most important part in the future of civilisation, will be witnesses of the mighty work she has accomplished. They will look back with pride to the progenitors of their race who lived in the glorious

and never-to-be-forgotten countries of the North, the birth-place of a new epoch in the history of mankind.

As ages roll on, England, the mother of nations, cannot escape the fate that awaits all; for on the scroll of time this everlasting truth is written—birth, growth, maturity, decay;—and how difficult for us to realise the fact when in the fulness of power, strength, and pride! Where is or where has been the nation that can or could exclaim, "This saying does not apply to me; I was born great from the beginning; I am so now, and will continue to be powerful to the end of time." The ruined and deserted cities; the scanty records of history, which tell us of dead civilisations, the fragmentary traditions of religious beliefs, the wrecks of empires, and the forgotten graves, are the pathetic and silent witnesses of the great past, and a sad suggestion of the inevitable fate in store for all.

The materials used in these volumes, in describing the cosmogony and mythology, the life, religion, laws and customs of the ancestors of the English-speaking nations of to-day, are mainly derived from records found in Iceland. These parchments, upon which the history of the North is written, and which are begrimed by the smoke of the Icelandic cabin, and worn by the centuries which have passed over them, recount to us the history and the glorious deeds of the race.

No land has bequeathed to us a literature, giving so minute and comprehensive an account of the life of a people. These *Sagas* (or "say") record the leading events of a man's life, or family history, and date from a period even anterior to the first settlement of Iceland (about 870 A.D.).

Some Sagas bear evident traces of having been derived, or even copied, from earlier documents now lost: in some cases definite quotations are given; others are evidently of a fabulous character, and have to be treated with great caution; but even these may be used as illustrating the customs of the times at which they were written. Occasionally great confusion is caused by the blending of the similar names of persons living at different periods.

My method of putting together the series of descriptions which will be found in the 'Viking Age' has been as follows:—

By reading carefully every Saga—and there are hundreds of them—dealing with the events of a man's life from his birth to his death, I was able to select the passages bearing on the various customs. When in one Saga the bare fact of a birth, or a marriage, or a burial, or a feast, etc., etc., was mentioned, in others full details of the ceremonies connected with them were found. After thus collecting my material, which was of the most superabundant character, I went over it and selected what seemed to me to be the best accounts of the various customs with which I deal in these volumes. I have not been content with the translations of other persons, but have in every case gone to the original documents and adopted my own rendering of them.

Some extracts from the Frankish Chronicles are given in the Appendix, as showing the power of the Northmen, and bearing strong testimony to the truthfulness of the Sagas. If I had not been afraid of being tedious, I could also have given extracts from Arabic, Russian, and other annals to the same effect.

The testimony of archæology as corroborating the Sagas forms one of the most important links in the chain of my argument; parchments and written records form but a portion of the material from which I have derived my account of the 'Viking Age.' During the last fifty years the History of the Northmen has been unearthed as it were—like that of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Romans—by the discovery of almost every kind of implement, weapon, and ornament produced by that accomplished race.

The Museums of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, France, Germany, Russia, are as richly stored with such objects as are the British Museum, the Louvre, the Museums of Naples and Boulak with the treasures of Egypt and Pompeii.

I have myself seen nearly all the objects or graves illustrated in this book, with the exception of a few Runic stones which have now disappeared, but are given in an old work of Jorgensen.

As my materials expanded themselves before me I felt like one of those mariners of old on a voyage of discovery. To them new lands were continuously coming into view; to me

new materials, new fields of literary and archæological wealth unfolded themselves incessantly. Thus carried away by enthusiasm and the love of the task I had undertaken, I have been able to labour for eight years and a half on the present work, with some interruptions from exhaustion and impaired health. May I, then, ask the indulgence of a public, which has always been kind to me, for all the shortcomings of my work?

I have received valuable assistance from many friends, but I desire especially to express my thanks to Mr. Bruun, the Chief Librarian of the Royal Library of Denmark, for his great kindness in allowing me so many privileges during the years I have worked in Copenhagen; to Mr. Birket Smith, of the University Library of Copenhagen; and Mr. Kaalund, Keeper of the Arna Magnæan Collection of Manuscripts, for the uniform courtesy they have shown me; among antiquarians, to my friend Professor George Stephens, author of the magnificent work, 'Northern Runic Monuments,' for his readiness in giving me all the information and help I needed, which sometimes occupied much of his valuable time (several illustrations of the runic stones, etc., in these volumes are taken from his work); to Mr. Vedel, Vice-President of the Royal Society of Antiquarians; to Messrs. Herbst, Sophu, Müller, and Petersen, of the Royal Museum of Northern Antiquities, for their great courtesy; I am also indebted to the works of the following distinguished antiquarians which have been invaluable to me in my researches and which have furnished me with many of the illustrations for my book: Ole Rygh, Bugge, Engelhart, Nicolaysen, Sehested, Steenstrup, Madsen, Säve, Montelius, Holmberg, Jorgensen, Baltzer, and Lorange; also to the works of the historians, Keyser, Geijer, Munch, Rafn, Vigfusson. My sincere thanks are also due to my young friend Jon Stefánsson, an Icelandic student, for his constant help in rendering the translations of the Sagas as accurate and literal as possible; and to my old friend Mr. Rasmus B. Anderson, late American Minister to Denmark, and translator of the 'Later Edda,' etc.; in England, to Messrs. A. S. Murray, Franks, and Read, of the British Museum; to Dr. Warre, the head master of Eton, and to General Pitt Rivers, author of a valuable work on the excavations in Cranborne Chase,

which contains objects strikingly similar to those of Scandinavia; also to my friends Mr. J. S. Keltie and Mr. Arthur L. Roberts; to my old friends Messrs. Clowes, who have taken great pains in carrying out what has proved to be a very difficult task for the printer, and who have had the work over two-and-a-half years in type.

I must thank, above all, my esteemed and venerable publisher, John Murray, for the great interest he has taken in the present work, which has tried his patience and liberality many a time, and also for the many years of uninterrupted friendship and the pleasant business relations (unhampered by any written agreement whatever), which have existed between us from the time when I came to him almost a lad, and he first undertook the publication of 'Explorations in Equatorial Africa,' in 1861, not forgetting my dear friends, his sons, John and Hallam, the former of whom has assisted me materially in seeing the work through the press, and my old companion Robert Cooke.

I cannot close this preface without thanking my old and ever true friend Robert Winthrop, of New York, descendant of the celebrated Colonial Governor of Massachusetts, to whom I dedicated "The Land of the Midnight Sun," for his unfailing kindness and sympathy during the years I have been engaged in the present work.

PAUL B. DU CHAILLU.

LONDON, *September*, 1889.

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL SAGAS

QUOTED IN

THE VIKING AGE,

INCLUDING THE PERIODS WITH WHICH THEY DEAL.

Name of Saga.	Century with which they deal.
The Earlier Edda	These are Mythical, and no accurate date can be affixed to them.
The Later Edda	
Fórnaldarsögur contains :—	
Völsunga	Partly Mythical.
Hervara	
Thorstein Vikingsson's (father of Fridthjof)	
Ketil Hæng's sons	
Grim Lodinkinnis'	
Fridthjof's	
Hrolf Kraki's	VI. (?)
Half's	VI. (?)
Sögubrot	VI.–VII. (?)
Ragnar Lodbrok's	VIII. (?)
Ragnar Lodbrok's Sons'	VIII. (?)
Norna Gest's	No date can be assigned to these.
Gautrek's	
Orvar Odd's	
Herraud and Bosi's	
Egil and Asmund's	
Hjalmter and Ölver's	
Göngu Hrolf's	
An Bosveigi's	

*** The above dates are all more or less conjectural, and the Sagas are chiefly valuable as illustrating manners and customs.

Egil's	Middle of IX. to end of X.
Njala's	End of X. to beginning of XI.
Laxdæla	IX.–XI. (886–1030).
Eyrbyggja	IX.–XI. (890–1031).
Islandinga Sögur contains :—	
I. Hord's Saga	X. (950–990).
II. Hœnsa Thoris' Saga	X.–XI. (990–1010).
III. Gunnlaug Ormstunga's Saga	X.–XI.
IV. Viga Styr's Saga	X.–XI.
V. Kjalnesinga Saga	IX.–XI.
VI. Gisli Súrsson	X.

Name of Saga.	Century with which they deal.
Droplaugarsona Saga	X.
Hrafnkel Freysgodi	X.
Bjorn Hitdæla Kappi	First half of XI.
Kormak's	X.
Fornsögur contains:—	
I. Vatnsdæla Saga	IX.–XI. (c. 870–1000).
II. Floamanna Saga	X. (c. 985–990).
III. Hallfred's Saga	End of X.
Gretti's Saga	X.–XI. (Grettir died 1031).
Viga Glum	X.
Vallaljots	Beginning of XI.
Vapnfirdinga	IX.–X.
Thorskfirdinga, or Gullthóri's	X. (c. 900-930).
Heidar Viga (continuation of Viga Styr's) ..	First half of XI.
Fœreyinga	X.–XI. (c. 960–1040).
Finnbogi Rami's	X.
Eirek the Red	X.
Thátt of Styrbjörn (nephew of Eirek the Victorious, who fell at the battle of Fyrisvellir, 983)	X.
Landnama	IX.–X. (the colonisation of Iceland).
Islendinga bok	IX.–XI. (c. 874–1118).
Ljosvetninga	990–1050.
Vemund's Saga	End of X. century.
Svarfdœla	First half of X. century.
Biskupa Sögur contains:—	
Kristni Saga	X.–XII. (c. 980–1120).
Sturlunga	XII.–XIII.(c.1120-1284).
Fornmanna Sögur contains:—	
I. Sagas of Kings of Norway	
II. Jomsvikinga Saga	X.
III. Knytlinga Saga	XI.–XII.
V. Fagrskinna (short history of Kings of Norway from Halfdan the Black to Sverrir)	IX.–XII.
Heimskringla Saga contains the Ynglinga Saga, the great work of Snorri Sturluson	Written in first half of XIII. cent., giving history of the Kings of Norway and Sweden from Odin down to 1177.
Flateyjarbok contains lives of Kings of Norway, etc.	
Fostbrædra Saga	XI. (c. 1015–30).
Konung's Skuggsja	XIII.
Rimbegla	XIV.
Orkneyinga	IX.–XIII. (c. 870–1206).

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL KINGS OF DENMARK NORWAY, AND SWEDEN,

SOME OF WHOM HAVE SAGAS OF THEIR OWN.

KINGS OF DENMARK.

	A.D.		A.D.
Gorm	900–940	Hörda Knut	1035–1042
Harald Bluetooth	945–985	Magnus the Good, ruled over Denmark and	
Svein Tjuguskegg	985–1014	Norway	1042–1047
Harald	1014–1018	Svein Ulfsson	1047–1075
Knut the Great	1018–1035		

KINGS OF NORWAY.

(Mostly petty Kings.)

	A.D.		A.D.
Halfdan the Black, died	860	Knut the Great reigned	1028–1035
Harald Fairhair, reigned	860–930	Magnus the Good „	1035–1047
Eirik Bloodaxe „	930–934	Harald Hardradi „	1047–1066
Hakon the Good „	934–960	Olaf the Quiet „	1066–1093
Harald Grafeld (greyskin) reigned	960–965	Magnus Barefoot „	1093–1103
Hakon Jarl the Great, the hero of the battle of Gomsviking, reigned	965–995	Three sons:—Eystein, Olaf, Sigurd Jórsalafari	1103–1130
Olaf Tryggvason „	995–1000	Civil war—Harald Gilli, Magnus the Blind, and	
Eirik Jarl .. „	1000–1015	others	1130–1162
St Olaf. .. .. „	1015–1028	Magnus Erlingsson ..	1162–1184
		Sverrir (Sigurdson) ..	1184–1202

KINGS OF SWEDEN.

(Not mentioned in the Odinic Genealogies, vol. i. p. 67.)

		A.D.
Ivar Vidfadmi Harald Hilditönn Sigurd Hring Ragnar Lodbrók	Kings of Sweden and Denmark.	Eymund and Björn .. 800–830 Olaf and Eymund .. c. 850 Eyrik Eymundsson died c. 882
Björn Ironside. Eirik and Refil.		Björn Eiriksson and Hring 900–950 Eirik the Victorious .. c. 950–994 Olaf Skaut-konung .. c. 994–1022 Önund Jakob .. .. c. 1022–1050 Eymund the Old .. c. 1050–1060 Steinkel Rögnvaldson c. 1060–1066

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THE VIKING AGE.

CHAPTER I.

CIVILISATION AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE NORTH.

Early antiquities of the North—Literature: English and Frankish chronicles—Early civilisation—Beauty of ornaments, weapons, &c.

A STUDY of the ancient literature and abundant archæology of the North gives us a true picture of the character and life of the Norse ancestors of the English-speaking peoples.

We can form a satisfactory idea of their religious, social, political, and warlike life. We can follow them from their birth to their grave. We see the infant exposed to die, or *water sprinkled*,[1] and a name bestowed upon it; follow the child in his education, in his sports; the young man in his practice of arms; the maiden in her domestic duties and embroidery; the adult in his warlike expeditions; hear the clash of swords and the songs of the *Scald*, looking on and inciting the warriors to greater deeds of daring, or it may be recounting afterwards the glorious death of the hero. We listen to the old man giving his advice at the *Thing*.[2] We learn about their dress, ornaments, implements, weapons; their expressive names and complicated relationships; their dwellings and convivial halls, with their primitive or magnificent furniture; their temples, sacrifices, gods, and sacred ceremonies; their personal appearance, even to the hair, eyes, face and limbs. Their festivals, betrothal and marriage feasts are open to us. We are present at their athletic games preparatory to the stern realities of the life of that period, where honour and renown were won on the battle-field; at the revel and drunken bout;

[1] A kind of baptism.

[2] The assembly of the people.

behold the dead warrior on his burning ship or on the pyre, and surrounded by his weapons, horses, slaves, or fallen companions who are to enter with him into *Valhalla*;[1] look into the death chamber, see the mounding and the *Arvel*, or inheritance feast.

These Norsemen had carriages or chariots, as well as horses, and the numerous skeletons of this animal in graves or bogs prove it to have been in common use at a very early period. Their dress, and the splendour of their riding equipment for war, the richness of the ornamentation of their weapons of offence and defence are often carefully described. Everywhere we see that gold was in the greatest abundance. The descriptions of such wealth might seem to be very much exaggerated; but, as will be seen in the course of this work, the antiquities treasured in the museums of the North bear witness to the truthfulness of the records. The spade has developed the history of Scandinavia, as it has done that of Assyria and Etruria, but in addition the Northmen had the Saga and Edda literature to perpetuate their deeds.

We are the more astonished as we peruse the Eddas and Sagas giving the history of the North, and examine the antiquities found in the country, for we hear hardly anything about the customs of the people from the Roman writers, and our ideas regarding them have been thoroughly vitiated by the earlier Frankish and English chronicles and other monkish writings, or by the historians who have taken these records as a trustworthy authority.

Some writers, in order to give more weight to these chronicles, and to show the great difference that existed between the invaders and invaded, and how superior the latter were to the former, paint in a graphic manner, without a shadow of authority, the contrast between the two peoples. England is described as being at that time a most beautiful country, a panegyric which does not apply to fifteen or twenty centuries ago; while the country of the aggressor is depicted as one of swamp and forest inhabited by wild and savage men. It is forgotten that after a while the people of the country attacked were the same people as those of the North or their

[1] The hall and abode of the slain.

descendants, who in intelligence, civilisation, and manly virtues were far superior to the original and effete inhabitants of the shores they invaded.

The men of the North who settled and conquered part of Gaul and Britain, whose might the power of Rome could not destroy, and whose depredations it could not prevent, were not savages; the Romans did not dare attack these men at home with their fleet or with their armies. Nay, they even had allowed these Northmen to settle peacefully in their provinces of Gaul and Britain.

No, the people who were then spread over a great part of the present Russia, who overran Germania, who knew the art of writing, who led their conquering hosts to Spain, into the Mediterranean, to Italy, Sicily, Greece, the Black Sea, Palestine, Africa, and even crossed the broad Atlantic to America, who were undisputed masters of the sea for more than twelve centuries, were not barbarians. Let those who uphold the contrary view produce evidence from archæology of an indigenous British or Gallic civilisation which surpasses that of the North.

The antiquities of the North even without its literature would throw an indirect but valuable light on the history of the earlier Norse tribes, the so-called barbarians, fiends, devils, sons of Pluto, &c., of the Frankish and English chronicles. To the latter we can refer for stories of terrible acts of cruelty committed by the countrymen of the writers who recount them with complacency; maiming prisoners or antagonists and sending multitudes into slavery far away from their homes. But the greatest of all outrages in the eyes of these monkish scribes was that the Northmen burned a church or used it for sheltering their men or stabling their horses.

The writers of the English and Frankish chronicles were the worst enemies of the Northmen, ignorant and bigoted men when judged by the standard of our time; through their writings we hardly know anything of the customs of their own people. They could see nothing good in a man who had not a religion identical with their own.

Still allowance must be made for the chroniclers; they wrote the history of their own period with the bigotry, passions, and hatreds, of their times.

The striking fact brought vividly before our mind is that the people of the North, even before the time when they carried their warfare into Gaul and Britain, possessed a degree of civilisation which would be difficult for us to realise were it not that the antiquities help us in a most remarkable manner, and in many essential points, to corroborate the truthfulness of the Eddas and Sagas.

The indisputable fact remains that both the Gauls and the Britons were conquered by the Romans and afterwards by the Northern tribes.

This Northern civilisation was peculiar to itself, having nothing in common with the Roman world. Rome knew nothing of these people till they began to frequent the coasts of her North Sea provinces, in the days of Tacitus, and after his time the Mediterranean. The North was separated from Rome by the swamps and forests of Germania—a vague term given to a country north and north-east of Italy, a land without boundaries, and inhabited by a great number of warlike, wild, uncivilised tribes. According to the accounts of Roman writers, these people were very unlike those of the North, and we must take the description given of them to be correct, as there is no archæological discovery to prove the contrary. They were distinct; one was comparatively civilised, the other was not.

The manly civilisation the Northmen possessed was their own; from their records, corroborated by finds in Southern Russia, it seems to have advanced north from about the shores of the Black Sea, and we shall be able to see in the perusal of these pages how many Northern customs were like those of the ancient Greeks.

A view of the past history of the world will show us that the growth of nations which have become powerful has been remarkably steady, and has depended upon the superior intelligence of the conquering people over their neighbours; just as to-day the nations who have taken possession of far-off lands and extended their domain, are superior to the conquered.

The museums of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Christiania, Bergen, Lünd, Göteborg, and many smaller ones in the pro-

vincial towns of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, show a most wonderful collection of antiquities which stand unrivalled in Central and Northern Europe for their wealth of weapons and costly objects of gold and silver, belonging to the bronze and iron age, and every year additions are made.

The weapons found with their peculiar northern ornamentation, and the superb ring coats-of-mail, show the skill of the people in working iron. A great number of their early swords and other weapons are damascened even so far back as the beginning of the Christian era, and show either that this art was practised in the North long before its introduction into the rest of Europe from Damascus by the Crusaders, or that the Norsemen were so far advanced as to be able to appreciate the artistic manufactures of Southern nations.

The remnants of articles of clothing with graceful patterns, interwoven with threads of gold and silver, which have fortunately escaped entire destruction, show the existence of great skill in weaving. Entire suits of wearing apparel remain to tell us how some of the people dressed in the beginning of our era.

Beautiful vessels of silver and gold also testify to the taste and luxury of those early times. The knowledge of the art of writing and of gilding is clearly demonstrated. In some cases, nearly twenty centuries have not been able to tarnish or obliterate the splendour of the gilt jewels of the Northmen. We find among their remains—either of their own manufacture or imported, perhaps as spoils of war—*repoussé* work of gold or silver, bronze, silver, and wood work covered with the thinnest sheets of gold; the filigree work displays great skill, and some of it could not be surpassed now. Many objects are ornamented with *niello*, and of so thorough a northern pattern, that they are incontestably of home manufacture. The art of enamelling seems also to have been known to the artificers of the period.

Objects, many of which show much refined taste, such as superb specimens of glass vessels with exquisite painted subjects—unrivalled for their beauty of pattern, even in the museums of Italy and Russia—objects of bronze, &c., make us pause with astonishment, and musingly ask ourselves from

what country these came. The names of Etruria, of ancient Greece, and of Rome, naturally occur to our minds.

Other objects of unquestionable Roman and Greek manufacture, and hundreds and thousands of coins, of the first, second, third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, show the early intercourse the people of the North had with the western and eastern Roman empire, and with Frisia, Gaul, and Britain.

A careful perusal of the Eddas and Sagas will enable us, with the help of the ancient Greek and Latin writers, and without any serious break in the chain of events, to make out a fairly continuous history which throws considerable light on the progenitors of the English-speaking people, their migrations northward from their old home on the shores of the Black Sea, their religion, and the settlement of Scandinavia, of England, and other countries.

CHAPTER II.

ROMAN AND GREEK ACCOUNTS OF THE NORTHMEN.

The three maritime tribes of the North—The fleets of the Sueones—Expeditions of Saxons and Franks—Home of these tribes—The tribes of Germania not seafaring—Probable origin of the names Saxons and Franks.

ROMAN writers give us the names of three maritime tribes of the North, which were called by them *Sueones*, *Saxones*, and *Franci*. The first of these, which is the earliest mentioned, is thus described by Tacitus (circ. 57-117 A.D.):—

"Hence the States of the Sueones, situated in the ocean itself, are not only powerful on land, but also have mighty fleets. The shape of their ships is different, in that, having a prow at each end, they are always ready for running on to the beach. They are not worked by sails, nor are the oars fastened to the sides in regular order, but left loose as in some rivers, so that they can be shifted here or there as circumstances may require." [1]

The word *Sviar*, which is constantly met with in the Sagas to denote the inhabitants of Svithjod (Sweden), or the country of which Upsala was the capital, corresponds somewhat to the name Sueones, and it is highly probable that in *Sueones* we have the root of *Sviar* and of *Svithjod*. The ships described by Tacitus are exactly like those which are described in this work as having been found in the North.

It stands to reason that the maritime power of the Sueones must have been the growth of centuries before the time of Tacitus, and from analogy of historical records we know that the fleets of powerful nations do not remain idle. Hence we must come to the conclusion that the Sueones navigated the sea long

[1] "Sueonum hinc civitates, ipso in oceano, præter viros armaque classibus valent. Forma navium eo differt quod utrinque prora paratam semper appulsui frontem agit. Nec velis ministrantur, nec remos in ordinem lateribus adjungunt: solutum, ut in quibusdam fluminum, et mutabile, ut res poscit, hinc et illinc remigium" (Germ. xliv.).

before the time of Tacitus, an hypothesis which is implied by the Eddas and Sagas as well as by the antiquities discovered.

That the Sueones, with such fleets, did not navigate westward further than Frisia is not credible, the more so that it was only necessary for them to follow the coast in order to come to the shores of Gaul, from which they could see Britain, and such maritime people must have had intercourse with the inhabitants of that island at that period; indeed, the objects of the earlier iron age discovered in Britain, which were until lately classed as Anglo-Roman, are identical with those of the country from which these people came, i.e., Scandinavia.

The Veneti, a tribe who inhabited Brittany, and whose power on the sea is described by Cæsar, were in all probability the advance-guard of the tribes of the North; their ships were built of oak, with iron nails, just as those of the Northmen; and the people of the country in which they settled were not seafaring.[1] Moreover, the similarity of the name to that of the Venedi, who are conjecturally placed by Tacitus on the shores of the Baltic, and to the Vends, so frequently mentioned in the Sagas, can scarcely be regarded as a mere accident.

"The Veneti have a very great number of ships, with which they have been accustomed to sail to Britain, and excel the rest of the people in their knowledge and experience of nautical affairs; and as only a few ports lie scattered along

[1] "Hujus est civitatis longe amplissima auctoritas omnis oræ maritimæ regionum earum, quod et naves habent Veneti plurimas, quibus in Britanniam navigare consuerunt, et scientia atque usu nauticarum rerum reliquos antecedunt, et in magno impetu maris atque aperto, paucis portibus interjectis, quos tenent ipsi, omnes fere qui eo mari uti consuerunt, habent vectigales" (Gallic War, iii. c. 8).

"Namque ipsorum naves ad hunc modum factæ armatæque erant; carinæ aliquanto planiores, quam nostrarum navium, quo facilius vada ac decessum æstus excipere possent; proræ admodum erectæ, atque item puppes ad magnitudinem fluctuum tempestatumque accommodatæ; naves totæ factæ ex robore ad quamvis vim et contumeliam perferendam; transtra pedalibus in latitudinem trabibus confixa clavis ferreis digiti pollicis crassitudine; ancoræ pro funibus ferreis catenis revinctæ; pelles pro velis alutæque tenuiter confectæ, hæ sive propter lini inopiam atque ejus usus inscientiam, sive eo, quod est magis verisimile, quod tantas tempestates Oceani tantosque impetus ventorum sustineri, ac tanta onera navium regi velis non satis commode posse arbitrabantur. Cum his navibus nostræ classi ejusmodi congressus erat, ut una celeritate et pulsu remorum præstaret; reliqua, pro loci natura, pro vi tempestatum, illis essent aptiora et accommodatiora. Neque enim his nostræ rostro nocere poterant (tanta in his erat firmitudo), neque propter altitudinem facile telum adjiciebatur, et eadem de causa minus commode copulis continebantur. Accedebat, ut, cum sævire ventus cœpisset et se vento dedissent, et tempestatem ferrent facilius, et in vadis consisterent tutius, et ab æstu relictæ nihil saxa et cautes timerent; quarum rerum omnium nostris navibus casus erat extimescendus" (c. 13).

that stormy and open sea, of which they are in possession, they hold as tributaries almost all those who have been accustomed to traffic in that sea. . . ."

"For their own ships were built and equipped in the following manner: Their ships were more flat-bottomed than our vessels, in order that they might be able more easily to guard against shallows and the ebbing of the tide; the prows were very much elevated, as also the sterns, so as to encounter heavy waves and storms. The vessels were built wholly of oak, so as to bear any violence or shock; the cross-benches, a foot in breadth, were fastened by iron spikes of the thickness of the thumb; the anchors were secured to iron chains, instead of to ropes; raw hides and thinly-dressed skins were used for sails, either on account of their want of canvas and ignorance of its use, or for this reason, which is the more likely, that they considered that such violent ocean storms and such strong winds could not be resisted, and such heavy vessels could not be conveniently managed by sails. The attack of our fleet on these vessels was of such a nature that the only advantage was in its swiftness and the power of its oars; in everything else, considering the situation and the fury of the storm, they had the advantage. For neither could our ships damage them by ramming (so strongly were they built), nor was a weapon easily made to reach them, owing to their height, and for the same reason they were not so easily held by grappling-irons. To this was added, that when the wind had begun to get strong, and they had driven before the gale, they could better weather the storm, and also more safely anchor among shallows, and, when left by the tide, need in no respect fear rocks and reefs, the dangers from all which things were greatly to be dreaded by our vessels."

Roman writers after the time of Tacitus mention warlike and maritime expeditions by the Saxons and Franks. Their names do not occur in Tacitus, but it is not altogether improbable that these people, whom later writers mention as ravaging every country which they could enter by sea or land, are the people whom Tacitus knew as the Sueones.

The maritime power of the Sueones could not have totally disappeared in a century, a hypothesis which is borne out by the fact that after a lapse of seven centuries they are again mentioned in the time of Charlemagne; nor could the supremacy of the so-called Saxons and Franks on the sea have

arisen in a day; it must have been the growth of even generations before the time of Tacitus.

Ptolemy (circ. A.D. 140) is the first writer who mentions the Saxons as inhabiting a territory north of the Elbe, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus.[1] They occupied but a small space, for between them and the Cimbri, at the northern extremity of the peninsula, he places ten other tribes, among them the Angli.

About a century after the time of Ptolemy, Franks and Saxons had already widely extended their expeditions at sea. Some of the former made an expedition from the Euxine, through the Mediterranean, plundered Syracuse, and returned without mishap across the great sea (A.D. circ. 280).[2]

"He (Probus) permitted the Bastarnæ, a Scythian race, who had submitted themselves to him, to settle in certain districts of Thrace which he allotted to them, and from thenceforth these people always lived under the laws and institutions of Rome. And there were certain Franks who had come to the Emperor, and had asked for land on which to settle. A part of them, however, revolted, and having obtained a large number of ships, caused disturbances throughout the whole of Greece, and having landed in Sicily and made an assault on Syracuse, they caused much slaughter there. They also landed in Libya, but were repulsed at the approach of the Carthaginian forces. Nevertheless, they managed to get back to their home unscathed."

"Why should I tell again of the most remote nations of the Franks (of Francia), which were carried away not from those regions which the Romans had on a former occasion invaded, but from their own native territory, and the farthest shores of the land of the barbarians, and transported to the deserted parts of Gaul that they might promote the peace of the Roman Empire by their cultivation and its armies by their recruits?"[3]

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[1] Ἐπὶ τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικῆς χερσονήσου Σάξονες (Geog. lib. ii. c. 2).

[2] Βαστάρνας δε, Σκύθικον ἔθνος, ὑποπεσόντας αὐτῷ προσέμενος κατῴκισε Θρᾳκίοις χωρίοις· καὶ διετέλεσαν τοῖς Ῥωμαίων βιοτεύοντες νόμοις. καὶ Φράγκων τῷ βασιλεῖ προσελθόντων καὶ τυχόντων οἰκήσεως μοῖρά τις ἀποστᾶσα, πλοίων ἐυπορήσασα, τὴν Ἑλλάδα συνετάραξεν ἅπασαν καὶ Σικελίᾳ προσσχοῦσα καὶ τῇ Συρακουσίων προσμίξασα πολὺν κατὰ ταύτην εἰργάσατο φόνον. ἤδη δε καὶ Λιβύῃ προσορμισθεῖσα, καὶ ἀποκρουσθεῖσα δυνάμεως ἐκ Καρχηδόνος ἐπενεχθείσης, οἷα τε γέγονεν ἀπαθὴς ἐπανελθεῖν οἴκαδε. (Zosimus. de Probo, i. 71).

[3] "Quid loquar rursus intimas Franciæ nationes jam non ab iis locis quæ olim Romani invaserant, sed a propriis ex origine sui sedibus, atque ab ultimis barbariæ littoribus avulsas, ut, in desertis Galliæ regionibus collocatæ et pacem Romani imperii cultu juvarent et arma delectu?" (Eumenius. Constantin. Aug. c. vi.)

"There came to mind the incredible daring and undeserved success of a handful of the captive Franks under the Emperor Probus. For they, having seized some ships, so far away as Pontus, having laid waste Greece and Asia, having landed and done some damage on several parts of the coast of Africa, actually took Syracuse, which was at one time so renowned for her naval ascendancy. Thereupon they accomplished a very long voyage and entered the Ocean at the point where it breaks through the land (the Straits of Gibraltar), and so by the result of their daring exploit showed that wherever ships can sail, nothing is closed to pirates in desperation."[1]

In the time of Diocletian and Maximian these maritime tribes so harassed the coasts of Gaul and Britain that Maximian, in 286, was obliged to make Gesoriacum or Bononia (the present Boulogne) into a port for the Roman fleet, in order as far as possible to prevent their incursions.

"About this time (A.D. 287) Carausius, who, though of very humble origin, had, in the exercise of vigorous warfare, obtained a distinguished reputation, was appointed at Bononia to reduce to quiet the coast regions of Belgica and Armorica, which were overrun by the Franks and Saxons. But though many of the barbarians were captured, the whole of the booty was not handed over to the inhabitants of the province, nor sent to the commander-in-chief, and the barbarians were, moreover, deliberately allowed by him to come in, that he might capture them with their spoils as they passed through, and by this means enrich himself. On being condemned to death by Maximian, he seized on the sovereign command, and took possession of Britain."[2]

Eutropius also records that the Saxons and others dwelt on the coasts of and among the marshes of the great sea, which

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[1] "Recursabat quippe in animos illa sub Divo Probo et paucorum ex Francis captivorum incredibilis audacia et indigna felicitas, qui a Ponto usque correptis navibus Græciam Asiamque populati nec impune plerisque Libyæ littoribus appulsi ipsas postremo, navalibus quondam victoriis nobiles ceperant Syracusas, et immenso itinere pervecti Oceanum, qua terras irrupit intraverant atque ita eventu temeritatis ostenderant nihil esse clausum piraticæ desperationi quo navigiis pateret accessus" (Eumenius Panegyr. Const. Cæs. xviii. circ. A.D. 300).

[2] "Per hæc tempora (i.e. 287) etiam Carausius, qui vilissime natus in strenuæ militiæ ordine famam egregiam fuerat consecutus, cum apud Bononiam per tractum Belgicæ et Armoricæ pacandum mare accepisset, quod Franci et Saxones infestabant, multis barbaris sæpe captis, nec præda integra aut provincialibus reddita aut imperatoribus missa consulto ab eo admitti barbaros ut transeuntes cum præda exciperet atque hac se occasione ditaret; a Maximiano jussus occidi purpuram sumpsit et Britannias occupavit" (Eutropius, Breviarium Historiæ, ix. ch. 21).

no one could traverse, but the Emperor Valentinian (320-375) nevertheless conquered them.

The Emperor Julian calls the

"Franks and Saxons the most warlike of the tribes above the Rhine and the Western Sea."[1]

Ammianus Marcellinus (d. circ. 400 A D.) writes:—

"At this time (middle of the 4th century), just as though the trumpets were sounding a challenge throughout all the Roman world, fierce nations were stirred up and began to burst forth from their territories. The Alamanni began to devastate Gallia and Rhætia; the Sarmatæ and Quadi Pannonia, the Picts and Saxons, Scots, and Attacotti constantly harassed the Britons."[2]

"The Franks and the Saxons, who are coterminous with them, were ravaging the districts of Gallia wherever they could effect an entrance by sea or land, plundering and burning, and murdering all the prisoners they could take."[3]

Claudianus asserts that the Saxons appeared even in the Orkneys:—

"The Orcades were moist from the slain Saxon."[4]

These are but a few of many allusions to the same effect which might be quoted.

That the swarms of Sueones and so-called Saxons and Franks, seen on every sea of Europe, could have poured forth from a small country is not possible. Such fleets as they possessed could only have come from a country densely covered with oak forests. We must come to the conclusion that Sueones, Franks, and Saxons were seafaring tribes belonging to one people. The Roman writers did not seem to know the precise locality inhabited by these people.

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[1] Orat. 1. Φράγκοι καὶ Σάξονες τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ῥῆνον καὶ τὴν ἑσπερίαν θάλατταν ἐθνῶν τὰ μαχιμώτατα.

[2] "Hoc tempore velut per universum orbem Romanum bellicum canentibus buccinis, excitæ gentes sævissimæ limites sibi proximos persultabant. Gallias Rhætiasque simul Alamanni populabantur: Sarmatæ, Pannonias et Quadi; Picti, Saxonesque, et Scoti, et Attacotti Britannos ærumnis vexavere continuis" (Rerum Gestarum, lib. xxvi. s. 4).

[3] "Gallicanos vero tractus *Franci*, et *Saxones* iisdem confines, quo quisque erumpere potuit terra vel mari, prædis acerbis incendiisque et captivorum funeribus hominum violabant" (Ammianus Marcellinus, d. circ. 400, lib. xxvii. c. 8, § 5).

[4] "Maduerunt Saxone fuso
Orcades; incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule;
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne."
(De Cons. Hon. iv. 31.)

It would appear that these tribes must have come from a country further eastward than the Roman provinces, and that as they came with ships, their home must have been on the shores of the Baltic, the Cattegat, and Norway; in fact, precisely the country which the numerous antiquities point to as inhabited by an extremely warlike and maritime race, which had great intercourse with the Greek and Roman world.

The dates given by the Greek and Roman writers of the maritime expeditions, invasions, and settlements of the so-called Saxons and Franks agree perfectly with the date of the objects found in the North, among which are numerous Roman coins, and remarkable objects of Roman and Greek art, which must have been procured either by the peaceful intercourse of trade or by war. To this very day thousands upon thousands of graves have been preserved in the North, belonging to the time of the invasions of these Northmen, and to an earlier period. From them no other inference can be drawn than that the country and islands of the Baltic were far more densely populated than any part of central and western Europe and Great Britain, since the number of these earlier graves in those countries is much smaller.

Every tumulus described by antiquaries as a Saxon or Frankish grave is the counterpart of a Northern grave, thus showing conclusively the common origin of the people.

Wherever graves of the same type are found in other countries we have the invariable testimony, either of the Roman or Greek writers of the Frankish and English Chronicles or of the Sagas, to show that the people of the North had been in the country at one time or another.

The conclusion is forced upon us that in time the North became over-populated, and an outlet was necessary for the spread of its people.

The story of the North is that of all countries whose inhabitants have spread and conquered, in order to find new fields for their energy and over-population; in fact, the very course the progenitors of the English-speaking peoples adopted in those days is precisely the one which has been followed by their descendants in England and other countries for the last three hundred years.

It is certain that the Franks could not have lived on the coast of Frisia, as they did later on, for we know that the country of the Rhine was held by the Romans, and, besides, as we have already seen, Julian refers to the Franks and Saxons as dwelling above the Rhine. Moreover, till they had to give up their conquests, no mention is made by the Romans of native seafaring tribes inhabiting the shores of their northern province, except the Veneti, and they would have certainly tried to subjugate the roving seamen that caused them so much trouble in their newly-acquired provinces if they had been within their reach.

From the Roman writers, who have been partially confirmed by archæology, we know that the tribes which inhabited the country to which they give the vague name of Germania were not seafaring people nor possessed of any civilisation. The invaders of Britain, of the Gallic and of the Mediterranean coasts could therefore not have been the German tribes referred to by the Roman writers, who, as we see from Julius Cæsar and other Roman historians, were very far from possessing the civilisation which we know, from the antiquities, to have existed in the North.

"Their whole life is devoted to hunting and warlike pursuits. From childhood they pay great attention to toil and hardiness; they bathe all together in the rivers, and wear skins or small reindeer garments, leaving the greater part of their bodies naked." [1]

Tacitus, in recording the speech of Germanicus to his troops before the battle at Idistavisus, bears witness to the uncivilised character of the inhabitants of the country.

"The huge targets, the enormous spears of the barbarians could never be wielded against trunks of trees and thickets of underwood shooting up from the ground, like Roman swords and javelins, and armour fitting the body . . . . the Germans had neither helmet nor coat of mail; their bucklers were not even strengthened with leather, but mere contextures of twigs

[1] "Vita omnis in venationibus atque in studiis rei militaris consistit. Ab parvulis labori ac duritiæ student . . . in fluminibus promiscue perluuntur et pellibus aut parvis rhenonum tegimentis utuntur magna corporis parte nuda" (Cæsar De Bello Gallico, vi. 21).

and boards of no substance daubed over with paint. Their first rank was to a certain extent armed with pikes, the rest had only stakes burnt at the ends or short darts."[1]

Now compare these descriptions with the magnificent archæology of the North of that period—as seen in these volumes—from which we learn that the tribes who inhabited the shores of the Baltic and the present Scandinavia had at the time the above was written reached a high degree of civilisation. We find in their graves and hoards, coins of the early Roman Empire not in isolated instances, but constantly and in large numbers, and deposited side by side with such objects as coats of mail, damascened swords and other examples of articles of highly artistic workmanship.

Three kinds of swords are often mentioned by the Northmen —the *mœkir*, the *sverd*, and the *sax*, while among the spears there is one called *frakki*, or *frakka*.

The double-edged sword was the one that was in use among the Romans, and they, seeing bodies of men carrying a weapon unlike theirs—single-edged, and called Sax—may have named them after it, and the Franks, in like manner, may have been called after their favourite weapon, the Frakki; but we see that neither the *sax* nor the *frakki* was confined to one tribe in the North. There is a Saxland in the Sagas—a small country situated east of the peninsula of Jutland, about the present Holstein—a land tributary to the Danish or Swedish Kings from the earliest times, but far from possessing the warlike archæology of the North, it appears to have held an insignificant place among the neighbouring tribes.

In the Bayeux tapestry the followers of William the Conqueror were called Franci, and they always have been recognised as coming from the North.

The very early finds prove that the Sax was not rare, for it occurs in different parts of the North and islands of the Baltic. The different swords and spears used were so common a[illegible]

well known to everybody, that we have no special description of them in the Sagas, except of their ornamentation; but in the Saga of Grettir there is a passage which shows that the Sax was single-edged.

Gretti went to a farm in Iceland to slay the Bondi Thorbjorn and his son Arnor. We read—

"When Gretti saw that the young man was within reach he lifted his *sax* high into the air, and struck Arnor's head with *its back*, so that his head was broken and he died. Thereupon he killed the father with his *sax*."

Whatever may be the origin of local names employed by the Roman writers we must look to the North for the maritime tribes described by them; there we shall find the home of the earlier English people, to whose numerous warlike and ocean-loving instincts we owe the transformation which took place in Britain, and the glorious inheritance which they have left to their descendants, scattered over many parts of the world, in whom we recognise to this day many of the very same traits of character which their ancestors possessed.

CHAPTER III.

THE SETTLEMENT OF BRITAIN BY NORTHMEN.

The Notitia—Probable origin of the name England—Jutland—The language of the North and of England—Early Northern kings in England—Danes and Sŭeones—Mythical accounts of the settlements of England.

BRITAIN being an island could only be settled or conquered by seafaring tribes, just in the same way as to-day distant lands can only be conquered by nations possessing ships. From the Roman writers we have the only knowledge we possess in regard to the tribes inhabiting the country to which they gave the vague name of Germania. From the Roman records we find that these tribes were not civilised and that they were not a seafaring people.

Unfortunately the Roman accounts we have of their conquest and occupation of Britain, of its population and inhabitants, are very meagre and unsatisfactory, and do not help us much to ascertain how the settlement in Britain by the people of the North began. Our lack of information is most probably due to the simple reason that the settlement, like all settlements of a new country, was a very gradual one, a few men coming over in the first instance for the purpose of trade either with Britons or Romans, or coming from the over-populated North to settle in a country which the paucity of archæological remains shows to have been thinly occupied. The Romans made no objection to these new settlers, who did not prove dangerous to their power on the island, but brought them commodities, such as furs, &c., from the North.

We find from the Roman records that the so-called Saxons had founded colonies or had settlements in Belgium and Gaul.

Another important fact we know from the records relating

o Britain is that during the Roman occupation of the island he Saxons had settlements in the country; but how they cam ither we are not told.

In the *Notitia Dignitatum utriusque imperii*, a sort of catalogue or "Army List," compiled towards the latter end of the fourth century, occurs the expression, "Comes litoris Saxonici per Britannias"—Count of the Saxon Shore in Britain. Within this litus Saxonicum the following places are mentioned:—thona, said to be "close by Hastings"; Dubris, said to be over; Rutupiæ, Richborough; Branodunum, Brancaster; Regulbium, Reculvers; Lemannis, West Hythe; Garianno Yarmouth; Anderida, Pevensey; Portus Adurni, Shoreham or Brighton.

This shows that the so-called Saxons were settled in Britain before the Notitia was drawn up, and at a date very much earlier than has been assigned by some modern historians.

The hypothesis that the expression "litus Saxonicum" is derived from the enemy to whose ravages it was exposed seems improbable. Is it not much more probable that the "litus Saxonicum per Britannias" must mean the shore of the country settled, not attacked, by Saxons? The mere fact of their attacking the shore would not have given rise to the name applied to it had they not settled there, for I maintain that there is no instance in the whole of Roman literature of a country being named after the people who attacked it. If, on the other hand, the Saxons had landed and formed settlements on the British coasts, the origin of the name "Litus Saxonicum" is easily understood.

Some time after the Romans relinquished Britain we find that part of the island becomes known as England; and, to make the subject still more confusing, the people composing its chief population are called Saxons by the chroniclers and later historians, the name given to them by the Romans.

That the history of the people called Saxons was by no means certain is seen in the fact that Witikind, a monk of the tenth century, gives the following account of what was then considered to be their origin[1]:—

[1] "Nam super hac re varia opinio est, aliis arbitrantibus de Danis Northmanisque originem duxisse Saxones, aliis autem aestimantibus, ut ipse adoles-

"On this there are various opinions, some thinking that the Saxons had their origin from the Danes and Northmen; others, as I heard some one maintain when a young man, that they are derived from the Greeks, because they themselves used to say the Saxons were the remnant of the Macedonian army, which, having followed Alexander the Great, were by his premature death dispersed all over the world."

As to how Britain came to be called England the different legends given by the monkish writers are contradictory.

The *Skjöldunga Saga*, which is often mentioned in other Sagas, and which contains a record down to the early kings of Denmark, is unfortunately lost: it would, no doubt, have thrown great light on the lives of early chiefs who settled in Britain; but from some fragments which are given in this work, and which are supposed to belong to it, we see that several Danish and Swedish kings claimed to have possessions in England long before the supposed coming of the Danes.

Some writers assert that the new settlers gave to their new home in Britain the name of the country which they had left, called *Angeln*, and which they claim to be situated in the southern part of Jutland; but besides the Angeln in Jutland there is in the Cattegat an Engelholm, which is geographically far more important, situated in the land known as the Vikin of the Sagas, a great Viking and warlike land, from which the name Viking may have been derived, filled with graves and antiquities of the iron age. There are also other Engeln in the present Sweden.

In the whole literature of the North such a name as Engeln is unknown; it may have been, perhaps, a local name.

In the Sagas the term *England* was applied to a portion only of Britain, the inhabitants of which were called *Englar*, *Enskirmenn*. Britain itself is called *Bretland*, and the people *Bretar*.

"Öngulsey (Angelsey) is one third of Bretland (Wales)" (Magnus Barefoot's Saga, c. 11).

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eutulus audivi quendam praedicantem le Graecis, quia ipsi dicerent, Saxone reliquias fuisse Macedonici exercitus qui secutus magnum Alexandrum inmatura morte ipsius per totum orbem sit dispersus" (Ann. lib. 1).

Another part of the country was called *Nordimbraland.*

It is an important fact that throughout the Saga literature describing the expeditions of the Northmen to England not a single instance is mentioned of their coming in contact with a people called *Saxons*, which shows that such a name in Britain was unknown to the people of the North. Nor is any part of England called Saxland.

To make the confusion greater than it is, some modern historians make the so-called Saxons, who were supposed to have come over with the mythical Hengist and others, a distinct race from the Northmen, who afterwards continued to land in the country.

In the Sagas we constantly find that the people of England are not only included among the Northern lands, but that the warriors of one country are helping the other. In several places we find, and from others we infer, that the language in both countries was very similar.

"All sayings in the Northern (norræn) tongue in which there is truth begin when the Tyrkir and the Asia-men settled in the North. For it is truly told that the tongue which we call Norræn came with them to the North, and it went through Saxland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and part of England" (Rimbegla, iii. c. i.).

"We are of one tongue, though one of the two, or in some respects both, are now much changed" (Prose Edda, ii.)

"Then ruled over England King Ethelred, son of Edgar (979). He was a good chief; he sat this winter in London. The tongue in England, as well as in Norway and Denmark, was then one, but it changed in England when William the Bastard won England. Thenceforth the tongue of Vallan (France) was used in England, for he (William) was born there" (Gunnlaug Ormstunga's Saga, c. 7).

That the language of the North should have taken a footing in a great part of England is due, no doubt, to the continuous flow of immigration, from the northern mother country, which entirely swamped the former native or British element.

The story given in the English or Irish chronicles of the appearance of the Danes, in A.D. 785, when their name is first mentioned, is as little trustworthy as that of the settlement of

England, and bears the appearance of contradiction and confusion in regard to names of people and facts.

We must remember that the Sueones are not mentioned from the time of Tacitus to that of Charlemagne (772–814), and certainly they had not disappeared in the meantime.

What were the Danes doing with their mighty fleets before this? Had their ships been lying in port for centuries? Had they been built for simple recreation and the pleasure of looking at them, or did their maritime power arise at once as if by magic? Such an hypothesis cannot stand the test of reasoning. The turning of a population into a seafaring nation is the work of time. Where in the history of the world can we find a parallel to this story of a people *suddenly* appearing with immense navies? Let us compare by analogy the statement of the chronicles with what might happen to the history of England in the course of time.

Suppose that for some reason the previous history of England were lost, with the exception of a fragment which spoke of her enormous fleet of to-day. Could it be reasonably supposed that this great maritime power was the creation of a few years?

A few years after the time fixed as that of their first supposed appearance we find these very Danes swarming everywhere with their fleets and warriors, not only in England, but in Gaul, in Brittany, up the Seine, the Garonne, the Rhine, the Elbe, on the coasts of Spain, and further eastward in the Mediterranean.

The Sueones, or Swedes, reappear at the close of the eighth and commencement of the ninth centuries by the side of the Danes, and both called themselves Northmen. Surely the maritime power of the Sueones, described by Tacitus, could not have been destroyed immediately after his death, only to reappear in the time of Charlemagne, when it again becomes prominent in the Frankish annals.

A remarkable fact not to be overlooked is that, in the time of Charlemagne, the Franks and Saxons were not a seafaring people, though their countries had an extensive coast with deep rivers. The Frankish annals never mention a Frank or Saxon fleet attacking the fleets of the Northmen, or preventing them from ascending their streams, though Charlemagne ordered ships to be built in order to resist their incursions.

While the country of the Saxons was being conquered by this Emperor, we find that the Saxons themselves had no vessels on the Elbe or Weser in which, if defeated, they could retire in safety, or by help of which they could prevent the army of their enemies from crossing their streams. Such tactics were constantly used by the Northmen in their invasions of ancient Gaul, Britain, Germania, Spain, &c.

Thus we see that, though hardly more than three hundred years had elapsed since the time when, according to the Roman writers, the fleets of the Franks and Saxons swarmed over every sea of Europe, not a vestige of their former maritime power remained in the time of Charlemagne, and the Saxons were still occupying the same country as in the days of Ptolemy.

Pondering over the above important facts, the question arises, Were not the Romans mistaken in giving the names of Saxons and Franks to the maritime tribes of whose origin, country, and homes they knew nothing, but who came to attack their shores? Were not these so-called Saxons and Franks in reality tribes of Sueones, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians? The Romans knew none of the countries of these people. It seems strange, if not incredible, to find two peoples, whose country had a vast sea-coast and deep rivers, totally abandoning the seafaring habits possessed by their forefathers.

It cannot be doubted that Ivar Vidfadmi, after him Harald Hilditönn, then Sigurd Hring and Ragnar Lodbrok and his sons, and probably some of the Danish and Swedish kings before them, made expeditions to England, and gained and held possessions there. Several distinct records, having no connection with each other, being parts of different Sagas and histories, with the archæology, form the evidence.

"Ivar Vidfadmi (wide-fathomer) subdued the whole of Sviaveldi (the Swedish realm); he also got Danaveldi (Danish realm) and a large part of Saxland, and the whole of Austrriki (Eastern realm, including Russia, &c.) and the fifth part of England. From his kin have come the kings of Denmark and the kings of Sweden who have had sole power in these lands" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 45).

The above is corroborated by another quite independent source.

"Ivar Vidfadmi ruled England till his death-day. As he lay on his death-bed he said he wanted to be carried to where the land was exposed to attacks, and that he hoped those who landed there would not be victorious. When he died it happened as he said, and he was *mound-laid.* It is said by many men that when King Harald Sigurdsson came to England he landed where Ivar's mound was, and he was slain there. When Vilhjálm Bastard came to the land he broke open the mound of Ivar and saw that the corpse was not rotten; he made a large pyre, and had Ivar burned on it; then he went up on land and got the victory" (Ragnar Lodbrók's Saga, c. 19).

We find that not only did the Norwegians call themselves Northmen, but that both Danes and Sueones were called Northmen in the Frankish Chronicles.[1]

"The Danes and Sueones, whom we call Northmen, occupy both the northern shore and all its islands."

So also Nigellus (in the reign of Louis Le Debonnaire).[2]

"The Danes also after the manner of the Franks are called by the name of Manni."

The time came when the people of the North, continuing their expeditions to Britain, attacked their own kinsmen. After the departure of the Romans the power of the new comers increased, and as they became more numerous, they became more and more domineering: the subsequent struggles were between a sturdy race that had settled in the country and people of their own kin, and not with Britons, who had been so easily conquered by the Romans, had appealed to them afterwards for protection, and had for a long period been a subject race. It is not easy to believe that the inhabitants of a servile Roman province could suddenly become stubborn and fierce warriors, nor are there any antiquities belonging to the Britain of yore which bear

[1] "Dani et Sueones, quos Northmannos vocamus, et Septentrionale litus omnes in eo insulas tenent" (Vita Caroli Magni, c. 12; Eginhard, historian and friend of Charlemagne).

[2] "Dani more quoque Francisco dicuntur nomine Manni."

witness to a fierce and warlike character displayed by the aboriginal inhabitants.

From the preceding pages we see that Franks and Saxons are continually mentioned together, and it is only in the North we can find antiquities of a most warlike and seafaring people, who must have formed the great and preponderating bulk of the invading host who conquered Britain.

Britain after a continuous immigration from the North, which lasted several hundred years, became the most powerful colony of the Northern tribes, several of whose chiefs claimed a great part of England even in the seventh century. Afterwards she asserted her independence, though she did not get it until after a long and tedious struggle with the North, the inhabitants and kings of which continued to try to assert the ancient rights their forefathers once possessed. Then the time came when the land upon which the people of these numerous tribes had settled became more powerful and more populous than the mother country; a case which has found several parallels in the history of the world. To-day the people of England as they look over the broad Atlantic may perhaps discern the same process gradually taking place. In the people of the United States of North America, the grandest and most colossal state founded by England or any other country of which we have any historical record, we may recognise the indomitable courage, the energy and spirit which was one of the characteristics of the Northern race to whom a great part of the people belong. The first settlement of the country, territory by territory, State by State—the frontier life with its bold adventures, innumerable dangers, fights, struggles, privations and heroism—is the grandest drama that has ever been enacted in the history of the world. The time is not far distant, if the population of the United States and Canada increases in the same ratio as it has done for more than a hundred years, when over three or four hundred millions of its people will speak the English tongue; and I think it is no exaggeration to say that in the course of time one hundred millions more will be added, from Australia, New Zealand and other colonies which to-day form part of the British Empire, but which are destined to become independent nations

In fact we hesitate to look still further into the future of the English race, for fear of being accused of exaggeration.

There is a mythical version of the settlement of Britain contradictory of the Roman records. This version is that of Gildas whose 'De Excidio Britanniæ' is supposed to have been composed in the sixth century (560 A.D.), and whose statements have unfortunately been taken by one historian after the other as a true history of Britain. His narrative, which gives an account of the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain and the numerous wars which followed their invasion, has been more or less copied by Nennius, Bede and subsequent chroniclers, whose writings are a mass of glaring contradictions, diffuse and intricate, for they contain names which appear to have been invented by the writers and which cannot be traced in the language of those times, while the dates assigned for the landing of the so-called Saxons do not agree with one another.

The historians who use Gildas as an authority and try to believe his account of the settlement of Britain by Hengist and Horsa (the stallion and the mare) are obliged, in order to explain away the Roman records, to give a most extraordinary interpretation to the Notitia.

We are all aware that the people of every country like to trace their origin or history as far back as possible, and that legends often form part of the fabric of those histories. The early chroniclers, who were credulous and profoundly ignorant of the world, took these fables for facts, or they may have possibly been incorporated in the text of their supposed works after their time. The description of the settlement of a country must be founded on facts which can bear the test of searching criticism if they are to be believed and adopted; Gildas and his copyists cannot stand that test, and the Roman records, as corroborated by the archæology and literature of the North and the archæology of England, must be taken as the correct ones.

The mythological literature of the North bears evidence of a belief prevalent among the people, that their ancestors migrated at a remote period from the shores of the Black Sea, through south-western Russia, to the shores of the Baltic.

This belief seems to be supported by a variety of evidence. Herodotus describes a people on the Tanais, the Budini, as being blue-eyed and yellow-haired, with houses built of wood, his description of the walls reminding one of the characteristics of the Danavirki (Herodotus, IV. 21, 108, 109). One of his tribes, the *Thysagetæ*, may possibly be indicated in the *Thursar* of the Voluspa, &c.

When we appeal to Archæology, we find in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, near to the old Greek settlement, graves similar to those of the North, containing ornaments and other relics also remarkably like those found in the ancient graves of Scandinavia. The Runes of the North remind us strikingly of the characters of Archaic Greek. If we follow the river Dnieper upwards from its mouth in the Black Sea, we see in the museums of Kief and Smolensk many objects of types exactly similar to those found in the graves of the North. When we reach the Baltic we find on its eastern shores the Gardariki of the Sagas, where, we are told, the Odin of the North placed one of his sons, and on the southern shores many specimens have been discovered similar to those obtained in Scandinavia.

In the following chapters the reader will be struck by the similarity of the customs of the Norsemen with those of the ancient Greeks as recorded by Homer and Herodotus; for example, the horse was very much sacrificed in the North, and Herodotus, describing the Massagetæ, says:

"They (the Massagetæ) worship the sun only of all the gods, and sacrifice horses to him" (I. 216).

In regard to the Jutes, Jutland = Jöts, Jötnar; Jötland, Jötunheim, we find them from the Sagas to be a very ancient land and people, and meet several countries bearing kindred names—even to this day we have Göteborg, in which the *G* is pronounced as English *Y*.

From the Roman, Greek, Frankish, Russian, English, and Arabic records, we must come to the conclusion that the "Viking Age" lasted from about the second century of our era to about the middle of the twelfth without interruption, hence the title given to the work which deals with the history and customs of our English forefathers during that period.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYTHOLOGY AND COSMOGONY OF THE NORSEMEN.

The three poems giving the mythology and cosmogony of the North—The Völuspa, Vafthrudnismal, Grimnismal, the Asar, Jötnar, and Thursar—Odin and Vafthrudnir—The nine worlds—Before the creation—The origin of the Hrim Thursar—Birth of Ymir—Birth of Odin—Vili and Ve—The ash Yggdrasil—The well of wisdom—Hel, one of the nine worlds—The bridge Bifröst—Heimdall—Bergelmir born before the creation—The Jötun—Ymir slain by Odin—The deluge of blood—Creation of the world—Divisions of time—End of the world—A new world.

In the three poems called *Völuspa*, *Vafthrudnismal*, and *Grimnismal*, we have the earliest accounts of the cosmogony and of the mythology of the people of the North. The grand central figure in the mythology is Odin. He and his kin formed the people known as Asar in the lore and literature of the North, and were treated as gods. These poems are too long to be given here in full, but in the following pages we have endeavoured, by means of extracts, to give a more or less consecutive account of the subjects with which they deal.

The Völuspa was an inspired poem of a Völva or Sibyl,[1] and embodies the records of the creation of the present world, and of the time prior to it; of the various races, their origin and history, and of the chaos and destruction which finally will overtake mankind.

It is in some places so obscure, that if it had not been partly explained by the later Edda, and had light thrown upon it by the sagas and ancient laws, it would be impossible to understand its meaning; and even now it is most difficult, and in some places impossible to fully comprehend several of its mythical parts, some of which will always remain enigmatical.

Vafthrudnismal is especially interesting as compared with

[1] Völuspa is derived from *völva*, *sybil* and *spá*, foretelling. The name *völva* seems to be derived from *völr* (staff, stick), as we see that the sibyls or prophetesses used to walk from place to place with a stick.

the Völuspa, with much of which it corresponds, and some part of which it amplifies.

The mythical and the real are so intermingled that it is often impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

In the beginning we are confronted by a chief named Odin, the son of Bör, who lived near the Tanais (the river Don) not far from the Palus Mæotis (the Sea of Azof), and there we find one Asgard, which in all probability had its original in some real locality.

Besides Asar and Jötnar, many other tribes are mentioned which can hardly be regarded as altogether mythical, some of which may have inhabited the far north of the ancient Sweden, or part of the present Russia and Scandinavia; the Thursar, who were also called Hrimthursar (hoar frost), and the Risar, also Bergrisar (mountain Risar), appear from these names to have lived in a cold mountainous country, possibly the region of the Ural Mountains.

Jötunheim, the chief burgh of which was *Utgard*, would appear to be a general, vague name given to a very wide extent of country not embraced in Asaheim (the home of the Asar). Jötunheim, as the name indicates, was the home or country of the Jötnar and Thursar, between whom and the Asar there was fierce enmity.

Some of the Jötnar were considered very wise, and Odin, as the chief of the Asar, determined to go in disguise to Jötunheim, the home of the Jötnar, in order to seek out the Jötun Vafthrudnir[1] (the mighty or wise in riddles), who was renowned for his knowledge. The song begins by representing Odin as consulting his wife, Frigg, as to the advisability of undertaking the journey. The stanzas which follow represent Odin questioning Vafthrudnir in his search for knowledge:—

Then went Odin
To try word-wisdom
Of the all-wise Jötun.
To a hall he came,
Owned by Ymir's father;
In went Ygg at once.[2]

(As Odin enters he sings—)
Hail, Vafthrudnir,
I have come into thy hall
To look at thyself;
First I want to know,
If thou art a wise
Or an all-wise Jötun.

[1] Vafthrudnir. *Vaf* = weave, or entangle; *thrudnir* = strong, or mighty; hence Vafthrudnir = mighty in riddles which cannot be disentangled.

[2] The awful = Odin.

Vafthrudnir.

Who is the man
That in my hall
Speaks to me?
Thou shalt not
Get out of it
Unless thou art the wiser.

Odin.

I am called *Gagnrad*,[1]
I have now come from my walking
Thirsty to thy hall;
Needing thy bidding
And thy welcome, Jötun;
Long time have I travelled.

Vafthrudnir.

Why standing on the floor
Dost thou speak to me?
Take a seat in the hall.
Then we shall try
Who knows more,
The guest or the old wise one.

Odin.

When a poor man
Comes to a rich one
Let him speak useful things or be silent;
Great babbling
I think turns to ill
For one who meets a cold-ribbed[2] man.

We are told in the Völuspa that Odin, in the quest of information, went to visit the Völva, or Sybil, Heid, who was possessed of supernatural powers of knowledge and foresight. She asks for a hearing from the sons of Heimdal, or mankind, and then proceeds to tell what she recollects:—

I remember Jötnar
Early born,
Who of yore
Raised me;[3]
I remember nine worlds,
Nine *ividi*[4]
The famous world-tree (Yggdrasil)
Beneath the earth.

The nine worlds were—1, Muspel; 2, Asgard; 3, Vanaheim (home of the Vanir); 4, Midgard; 5, Alfheim (world of the Alfar); 6, Mannheim (home of men); 7, Jötunheim (the home of the Jötnar); 8, Hel; 9, Niflheim.

The first beginnings of all things were apparently as obscure to the Völva as to others; nothing existed before the Creation. The world was then a gaping void (Ginnungagap), and there the Jötun Ymir, or the Hrim Thursar, lived. On each side of

[1] The one who gives useful advice.

[2] When the heart, which is near the ribs, is cold, the ribs are also cold; therefore this means *cold-hearted.*

[3] Fœda means both to give birth to, to raise, and to feed.

[4] *Ividi*, a very obscure word (only found here in the whole Northern literature), which has been translated differently without any particle of authority in any case, and in each case only as a mere guess. The word *vid* means tree, perhaps the world-tree, *Yggdrasil*, which extended its roots under the world.

Ginnungagap there were two worlds, Niflheim, the world of cold, and Muspelheim, the world of heat.

When Ymir lived
In early ages
Was neither sand nor sea,
Nor cool waves,
No earth was there
Nor heaven above,
There was gaping void
And grass nowhere.

"First there was a home (a world) in the southern half of the world called Muspel; it is hot and bright, so that it is burning and in flames; it is also inaccessible for those who have no *odals* (or family estates); there the one that sits at the land's end to defend it is called a Surt. He has a flaming sword, and at the end of the world he will go and make warfare and get victory over all the gods, and burn the whole world with fire" (Later Edda, c. 4).[1]

The origin of the Hrim Thursar and the Birth of Ymir, who lived in Ginnungagap, and of Odin, Vili, and Ve, is as follows:

"Gangleri asked, 'How was it before the kindreds existed and mankind increased?' Hár answered, 'When the rivers called Elivagar had run so far from their sources that the quick venom which flowed into them, like the dross which runs out of the fire, got hard, and changed into ice; when this ice stood still and flowed no longer, the exhalation of the poison came over it and froze into rime; the rime rose up all the way into the Ginnungagap.' Jafnhár said, 'The part of Ginnungagap turning to the north was filled with the heaviness and weight of ice and rime, and the opposite side with drizzle and gusts of wind; but the southern part of Ginnungagap became less heavy, from the sparks and glowing substances which came flying from Muspelheim.' Thridi said, 'Just as the cold and all things come from Niflheim, the things near Muspel were hot and shining; Ginnungagap was as warm as windless air. When the rime and the breath of the heat met so that the rime melted into drops, a human form came from these flowing drops with the power of the one who had sent the heat; he was called Ymir, but the Hrimthursar call him Örgelmir, and the kin of the Hrimthursar have sprung from him.' Gangleri asked, 'How did the kin grow from this, or how came it that there were more men; or dost thou believe in the god of whom thou didst tell now?' Hár answered, 'By no means do we think him a god; he was

[1] It is well known that the later Edda bears strong marks of the influence of Christianity, and we quote it with caution and only when it essentially agrees with Voluspa and other parts of the earlier Edda.

bad, and all his kinsmen; we call them Hrimthursar. It is told that when asleep he sweated, and then there grew a man and a woman from under his left arm, and one of his feet begot a son with the other; thence have sprung the kin of Hrimthursar. We call Ymir the Old Hrimthurs."

"Gangleri asked, 'Where did Ymir live, or by what?' 'It happened next when the hoar-frost fell in drops that the cow Audhumla grew out of it; four rivers of milk ran from her teats, and she fed Ymir.'

"Gangleri asked, 'On what did the cow feed?' Hár answered, 'She licked the rime-stones covered with salt and rime, and the first day when she licked them a man's hair came out of them in the evening; the second day a man's head; the third day a whole man was there; he is called Buri; he was handsome in looks, large, and mighty; he had Bör for son, who got Besla, daughter of Bölthorn jötun, for wife, and she had three sons, Odin, Vili,[1] Ve; and it is my belief that this Odin and his brothers are the rulers of heaven and earth. We think he is called so. Thus the man whom I know to be the greatest and most famous is called, and they may well give him this name'" ('Gylfaginning,' c. 5).

The ash tree Yggdrasil is one of the strangest conceptions found in any mythology.

An ash I know standing
Called *Yggdrasil*,
A high tree besprinkled
With white loam;
Thence come the dews
That drop in the dales;
It stands evergreen
Spreading over the well of Urd.

Three roots stand
In three directions
Under the ash Yggdrasil;
Hel dwels under one,
The Hrim-thursar under the second,
Under the third "mortal" men.
(Grimnismal).

Under it stands the well of wisdom for a drink from which Odin pledges his one eye.

"Gangleri said: 'Where is the head-place or holy place of the Asar?' Hár answered: 'At the ash of Yggdrasil, where the gods give their judgments every day.' Gangleri asked: 'What can be told of that place?' Jafnhár said: 'The ash is the largest and best of trees; its branches spread all over the world and reach up over the heaven; three roots of the tree hold it up and spread very widely. One (of the roots) is with the Asar, another with the Hrimthursar where of yore

[1] *Vili*, will; *Ve*, sanctuary, holy place. Cf. also 'Lokasenna,' 26; 'Ynglinga,' c. 3.

Ginnungagap was; the third is over Niflheim, and beneath it is Hvergelmin, but Nidhög gnaws its lower part. Under the root turning towards the Hrimthursar is Mimir's well, in which wisdom and intellect are hidden. Its owner is called Mimir; he is full of wisdom, for he drinks from the well of the horn Gjallar-horn. Odin came and asked for a drink of the well, and did not get it till he pawned his eye."

"What more wonders," asked Gangleri, "may be told of the ash?" Hár answered, "Many wonders. An eagle sits in the limbs of the ash and knows many things; between its eyes sits the hawk Vedrfölnir. The squirrel Ratatösk runs up and down the ash and carries words of envy between the eagle and Nidhög. Four harts run on the limbs of the ash and eat the buds; they are called Dain, Dvalin, Duneyr, and Durathror. So many serpents are in Hvergelmir with Nidhög that no tongue can number them" (Gylfaginning, c. 16).

Heid in the Voluspa tells about the holy tree, and that the horn of Heimdall is hidden under it till the last fight of the gods. Yggdrasil is watered from the water of the well.

She knows that the blast
Of Heimdal is hidden
Under the bright
Holy tree;
She sees it poured over
By a muddy stream
From the pledge of Valfödr;
Know ye all up to this and onward?

Under the tree lived the three Nornir (Genii), who shape the destinies of men.

Thence come three maidens,
Knowing many things,
Out of the hall
Which stands under the tree;
One was called Urd,
Another Verdandi,
The third Skuld;
They carved on wood tablets,
They chose lives,
They laid down laws
For the children of men,
They chose the fates of men.

Hel was one of the nine worlds, and stood under the ash Yggdrasil, where the dead, who did not die on the battle-field, went. Hence, when a man had died, Hel-shoes were put on his feet for the journey.

Odin goes to the world of Hel, in which was the Gnipa cave, in order to inquire about the fate of his son Baldr who had died.

"Odin threw Hel (daughter of Loki) down into Niflheim, and gave her power over nine worlds; she was to lodge all those who were sent to her, namely, those who died of sickness and old age. She has a large homestead there, and her house-

walls are wonderfully high, and her doors are large. Her hall is called Eljúdnir, her plate famine, her knife hunger; ganglati (lazy-goer, idler) her thrall; ganglöt (idler) her bondswoman; her threshold is called stumbling-block; her bed the couch of one who is bed-ridden; her bed-hangings (ársal) the glittering evil. One half of her body is livid, and the other half skin-colour; therefore she is easily known, and her look is frowning and fierce" (Later Edda, c. 34, Gylfaginning).

"It is the beginning of this Saga that Baldr the Good dreamt great and dangerous dreams about his life. When he told them to the Asar they consulted and resolved to ask for safety for Baldr from every kind of danger; Frigg (Odin's wife) took oaths from fire, water, iron, and every kind of metal, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds, poison, serpents, that they would spare Baldr's life. When this was done and known, Baldr and the Asar entertained themselves thus: he stood up at the Things and some gods shot at him, or others struck at him or threw stones at him. Whatever they did he was not hurt, and all thought this a great wonder. When Loki Lanfeyjarson saw this he was angry that Baldr was not hurt. He changed himself into a woman's shape and went to Frigg in Fensalir. Frigg asked this woman if she knew what the Asar were doing at the Thing. She said that they all shot at Baldr, and that he was not hurt. Frigg said, 'Weapons or trees will not hurt Baldr; I have taken oaths from them all.' The woman asked, 'Have all things taken oaths to spare Baldr's life?' Frigg answered, 'A bush grows east of Valhöll called Mistiltein (mistle-toe); I thought it was too young to take an oath.' The woman went away; but Loki took the mistletoe and tore it up and went to the Thing. Höd (Baldr's brother) stood in the outmost part of the ring of people. Loki said to him, 'Why dost thou not shoot at Baldr?' He answered, 'Because I do not see where he is, and also I am weaponless.' Loki said, 'Do like other men and show honour to Baldr; I will show thee where he stands; shoot this stick at him.' Höd took the mistletoe and shot at Baldr as Loki showed him; it pierced Baldr, who fell dead to the ground. This was the most unfortunate deed that has been done among the gods and men. When Baldr was fallen none of the Asar could say a word or touch him with their hands, and they looked at each other with the same mind towards the one who had done this deed, but no one could take revenge; it was such a place of peace. When they tried to speak the tears came first, so that no one could tell to the other his sorrow in words. Odin suffered most from this loss,

because he knew best what a loss and damage to the Asar the death of Baldr was. . . ." (Gylfaginning, c. 49).

"It is to be told of Hermód that he rode nine nights through dark and deep valleys and saw nothing before he came to the river Gjöll[1] and rode on the Gjallar bridge,[2] which is covered with shining gold.[3] Modgud is the name of the maiden who guards the bridge; she asked him his name and kin, and said that the day before five arrays of dead men rode over the bridge, 'but the bridge sounds not less under thee alone, and thou hast not the colour of dead men; why ridest thou here on the way of Hel?' He answered, 'I am riding to Hel to seek Baldr, or hast thou seen Baldr on the way of Hel?' She answered that Baldr had ridden over the Gjallar bridge, 'but the way of Hel lies downward and northward.' Hermód rode till he came to the gates of Hel; then he alighted and girthed his horse strongly, mounted and pricked it with the spurs; the horse leaped so high over the gate that it touched nowhere. Then Hermód rode home to the hall, alighted, went in and saw his brother Baldr sitting in a high-seat; he stayed there the night. In the morning Hermód asked Hel to allow Baldr to ride home with him, and told how great weeping there was among the Asar. Hel said she would see if Baldr was as beloved as was told; if all things, living and dead, in the world weep over him, he shall go back to the Asar, but remain with Hel (me) if any refuse or will not weep. Then Hermód rose, and Baldr let him out of the hall and took the ring Draupnir and sent it to Odin as a remembrance, and Nanna[4] sent to Frigg a linen veil and more gifts, and to Fulla a gold ring. Then Hermód rode back to Asgard and told all the tidings he had seen or heard. Thereupon the Asar sent messengers all over the world to ask that Baldr might be wept out of Hel, and all did it, men and beasts, earth and stones, trees, and all metals, as thou must have seen that these things weep when they come from frost into heat. When the messengers went home and had performed their errands well, they found a jötun woman sitting in a cave, called Thökk; they asked her to weep Baldr (out of) Hel; she answered—

Thökk will weep
With dry tears
The burning voyage of Baldr;
I never enjoyed
A living or a dead man's son;
May Hel keep what she has.

[1] Gjöll (the sounding one).
[2] Gjallar bridge (the bridge of Gjöll).
[3] Modgud (the valkyrja of anger).
[4] Nanna is told of in Baldr's burning, as she, his wife, was burnt with him.

It is guessed that this was Loki Laufeyjarson, who had caused most evils among the Asar."

"Then also the dog Garm, which is tied in front of Gnipa cave, got loose; he is the greatest terror, he fights Tyr and they kill each other" (Gylfaginning, c. 5).

The wicked seem to have died twice: first they die and get into Hel, then they die again and get into *Niflhel* = *Foggy Hel.* The following is one of the answers of Vafthrudnir to Odin:—

Of the runes[1] of Jötnar
And those of all the gods
I can tell thee true,
For I have been
In every world;
I have gone to nine
Worlds beneath *Nifl-hel;*
There die the men from *Hel.*

The sides of the rim of heaven communicate with each other by a bridge called Bifröst, or the bridge of the Asar, on which Heimdall, the watchman of the gods, stood.

"Heimdall is the watchman of the gods standing on Bifröst Bridge (the rainbow)" (Later Edda, 27).

"Heimdall is named the White As: he is great and holy; nine maidens bore him as son, and they were all sisters. He is also called Hallinskidi and Gullintanni (gold tooth). His teeth were of gold, his horse is called gold maned. He lived at a place called Himinbjörg (heaven mountains) by Bifröst. He is the warden of the gods, and sits there at the end of heaven to guard the bridge against the Berg Risar (mountain Jötnar); he needs less sleep than a bird, he can see equally by night and by day a hundred leagues away, and he hears when the grass grows, or the wool on the sheep, and all that is louder than these. He has the horn called Gjallarhorn, and his blowing is heard through all worlds. The sword of Heimdall is called Höfud" (Gylfaginning, 27).

We find that the Jötnar and Asar were separated from each other by a large river whose waters never freeze.

Vafthrudnir.
Tell me, Gagnrad, &c.,
How the river is called
Which divides the land
Between the sons of Jötnar and the gods.

[1] In Sigurdrifumal it is said the runes were in the holy mead, sent to Asar, Alfar, and Vanir.

Odin.

Ifing is the river called
That parts the land
Between the sons of Jötnar and the gods;
Open shall it flow
All the days of the world;
No ice will come on it.

From Vafthrudnismal we learn of the origin of Bergelmir, who was born before the Creation.

It is an important question which are the most ancient people—the Asar, or the ancient kinsmen of Ymir?

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Who of the Asar,
Or of the sons of Ymir,
Was the oldest in early days?

Vafthrudnir.

Numberless winters
Before the earth was shaped
Was Bergelmir born.
Thrudgelmir
Was his father
And Orgelmir his grandfather.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence first Orgelmir came
Among the sons of Jötnar,
Thou wise Jötun.

Vafthrudnir.

From *Elivâgar*[1]
Spurted drops of poison
Which grew into a Jötun;
Thence are our kin
All sprung;
Hence they are always too hideous.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
How that strong Jötun
Begat children
As he had not beheld a *gyg*?[2]

Vafthrudnir.

In the armpit
Of the Hrim-thursar, it is said,
Grew a maiden and a son;
Foot begat with foot
Of that wise Jötun
A six-headed son.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
What thou earliest rememberest,
Or knowest farthest back;
Thou art an all-wise Jötun.

Vafthrudnir.

Numberless winters
Ere the earth was shaped
Was Bergelmir born;
The first I remember
Is when that wise Jötun
Was laid in the flour-bin.[3]

In due course Ymir was slain by Odin, Vili, and Ve, the three sons of Bör, who was himself a Jötun, and therefore of the same kin as Ymir. Having slain Ymir, the sons of Bör

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[1] Elivagar, the streams flowing from the well Hvergelmir in Niflheim froze into a Jötun.

[2] *i.e.*, a Jötun woman.

[3] A kind of trough used for flour; so the boat is called in which he saved his life as is seen by what follows. In the lay of Hyndla we read:—

"All Jötnar came from Ymir."

proceeded to make the earth out of his body, and to give the sun, moon, and stars their places in heaven. The flow of his blood was so great as to cause a deluge. Bergelmir was the only one of the Hrim-Thursar who escaped in a boat with his wife, and from him came a new race of Hrim-Thursar.

"The sons of Bör slew the Jötun Ymir, but when he fell there flowed so much blood from his wounds that it drowned the whole race of the Hrim-Thursar, except one who escaped with his household. Him the Jötnar called Bergelmir; he and his wife went on board his ark, and thus saved themselves; from them are descended a new race of Hrim-Thursar" (Later Edda).

After the destruction of the earlier Hrim-Thursar we hear how the sons of Bör created the world, and we are told how the earth and the heavens were made from Ymir.

From Ymir's flesh
The earth was shaped,
And from his blood the sea;
The mountains from his bones;
From his hair the trees,
And the heaven from his skull.

But from his brows
The mild gods made
Midgard for the sons of men;
And from his brain
Were all the gloomy
Clouds created.

(Grimnismal.)

We are also told of the creation of the planets and stars, of our world, of the sea, of the moon, and of day and night. The year was reckoned by winters (vetr), and the days by nights (nott).

The year was divided into months (mánud or mánad).

"*Haustmánud* (harvest-month) is the last before winter; *Gormánud* (gore-month, called thus from the slaughter of cattle then taking place) the first month of winter; *Frermánud* (frost-month); *Hrútmánud* (the ram's month); *Thorri* (the month of waning or declining winter); *Gói, Einmánud* . . . . then *Gaukmánud* or *Sádtid* (cuckoo-month or sowing-tide); *Eggtíd* or *Stekktíd* (egg-tide or weaning-tide); *Sólmánud* or *Selmánud* (sun-month or sæter-month in which the cattle are removed to the sel or sæter); *Heyjannir* (haymaking-month); *Kornskurdarmánud* (grain-reaping month)" (Skaldskaparmal, c. 63).

The month was subdivided into six weeks; each week con-

tained five days. The days were called—Týsdag = Tuesday; Ódinsdag = Wednesday; Thórsdag = Thursday; Frjádag = Friday; Laugardag (bath-day) or Thváttdag (washing-day) = Saturday.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence the moon came
That walks above men,
And the sun also?

Vafthrudnir.

Mundilfori[1] is called
The father of the moon,
And of the sun also;
Wheel round the heaven
They shall every day,
And tell men of the years.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence the day came
That passes over mankind,
Or the night with her new moons?

Vafthrudnir.

Delling (the bright) is called
The father of *Dag* (the day)
But *Nott* (night) was Norvi's[2] daughter;
The full moons and the new ones
The good gods made
To tell men the years.
(Vafthrudnismal.)

The following is the origin of Midgard:—

Ere the sons of Bör
Raised the lands,
They who shaped
The famous *Midgard;*
The sun shone from the south
On the stones of the hall;
Then the ground grew
With green grass.

The sun from the south,[3]
The companion of the moon,
With her right hand took hold
Of the rim of heaven;[4]
The sun knew not
Where she[5] owned halls,
The moon knew not
What power he[6] had;
The stars knew not
Where they owned places.

Then all the powers went
To their judgment seats,[7]
The most holy gods
Counselled about this;
To night and the quarters of the moon
Gave they names;
They gave names to
Morning and midday,
To afternoon and eve,
That the years might be reckoned.
(Völuspa.)

Then we have the origin of the wind and of winter. Hræsvelg means the swallower of corpses.

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[1] Mundilfori, from *mondul* = a handle, and *fara* = to go; the one veering or turning round.

[2] A Jötun.

[3] Sun, in the north, is of feminine gender, and the moon masculine.

[4] The rim of heaven = the line of the sky from the horizon.

[5] The sun.

[6] The moon.

[7] Rökstól—*stol*, seat or stool; *rök*, judgment.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence the wind comes
Who goes over the waves;
Men do not see him.

Vafthrudnir.

Hræsvelg is called
He who sits at heaven's end,
A Jötun in an eagle's shape;
From his wings
It is said the wind comes
Over all mankind.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence the winter came,
Or the warm summer,
First with the wise gods.

Vafthrudnir.

Vindsval[1] is called
The father of winter,
And *Svasud*[2] the father of summer.

Another amplification of the Creation is given in Gylfaginning.

Thridi said:

"They took Ymir's skull, and made thereof the sky, and raised it over the earth with four sides. Under each corner they set four Dvergar, which were called Austri, East; Vestri, West; Nordri, North; Sudri, South. Then they took glowing sparks that were loose and had been cast out from Muspelheim, and placed them in the midst of the boundless heaven, both above and below, to light up heaven and earth; they gave resting-places to all fires, and set some in heaven; some were made free to go under heaven, but they gave them a place and shaped their course. In old songs it is said that from that time days and years were reckoned."

The creation of the world, and of the heavens and planets, is followed by that of the Dvergar and of man and woman, who were helpless and fateless (their destinies not having been spun by the Nornir); from these two mankind are descended.

Then all the gods went
To their judgment-seats,
The most holy gods,
And counselled about
Who should create
The host of Dvergar
From the bloody surf[3]
And from the bones of Blain.

There did Modsognir[4]
The mightiest become
Of all Dvergar,

[1] Wind-chilly.
[2] Sweet mood.
[3] Bloody surf means poetically the sea, and the expression, the bones of Blain, a name nowhere else mentioned in the earlier Edda, seems to refer to a fight, the record of which is lost to us.
[4] Modsognir and Durin, only mentioned here, refer to some lost myth. There seem to have been three kinds of tribes of Dvergar, having for chiefs, respectively, Modsognir, Durin, Dvalin. "Many *manlikenesses* in the earth," namely Dvergar, who are often described as living under the earth.

And Durin next to him;
They two shaped
Many *man-likenesses*
In the ground,
As Durin has told.[1]
* * *

It is time to reckon
Down to Lofar,
For mankind (Gónar),
The Dvergar in Dvalin's host,[2]
Those who went
From the stone-halls,
The host of Aurvangar,
To Jöruvellir (battle-plains).
* * *

Until out of that host[3]
To the house[4]
Came three Asar
Mighty and mild;
They found on the ground
Ask and Embla,
Helpless and fateless

They had no breath,
They had no mind,
Neither blood nor motion
Nor proper complexion.
Odin gave the breath,[5]
Hœnir gave the mind,
Lodur gave the blood
And befitting hues.

(Völuspa.)

Finally the Völva describes the end of the world.

Eastward sat the old one
In Jarnvid,[6]
And there bred
The brood of Fenrir;
Of them all
One becomes
The destroyer of the sun
In the shape of a Troll.

He[7] is fed with the lives
Of death-fated men;
He reddens the seat of the gods
With red blood;

The sunshine becomes black
After the summers,
And all weather woe-begone.
Know ye all up to this and onward?

The herdsman of the Jötun woman,
The glad Egdir,
Sat there on a mound
And struck a harp,
A bright-red cock,
Called Fjalar,
Crowed near him
In the bird-wood.

---

[1] The five stanzas (Nos. 11, 12, 13, 15, 16) omitted give a long list of names of Dvergar, among them those of Nyi, the growing moon; Nidi, the waning moon; Nordri, the north, &c.; Althjof, all-thief; Dvalin, the delayer, &c., &c.

[2] The Dvergar clan of Dvalin, who is not mentioned before, seems to have been the highest among all the Dvergar.

From Alvismal we may infer that the Dvergar were related to the Thursar.

[3] There seems to be something missing between the stanzas 16 and 17, unless the poet means the host of the Dvergar, who were under the three above-named chiefs.

[4] It seems that the house in which Ask and Embla were to live was in existence already. *Ask* means ash-tree, like *Yggdrasil*; *Embla* only occurs here in the Völuspa, and it is most difficult consequently to give a meaning to it; the elm-tree is called *alm*, and perhaps is here meant to be in contrast to the ash.

[5] Odin, Hœnir, and Lodur gave them life. Hœnir is mentioned in the later Edda. Lodur is only mentioned in the beginning of Heimskringla.

[6] Jarnvid, or iron forest; the word is only found here and in the Later Edda. The old one means a Jötun woman, Angrboda, by whom Loki begat the Fenrir wolf ('Later Edda,' c. 34).

[7] The son of Fenrir. According to the prose Edda *Mánagarm* is the name of the son of the Fenrir wolf who swallowed the moon. See Gylfaginning, c. 12.

Crowed for the Asar
Gullinkambi (golden-comb),
He rouses the warriors
At Herjafödr's (host-father);
But another crows
Under the ground,
A dark red cock,[1]
In the halls of Hel.

Garm barks violently
Before the Gnipa cave;
The fetters will break
And the wolf will run;
She (the Völva) knows many tales.
I see further forward
To the doom of the powers
The dark doom of the gods.

Brothers will fight
And become each other's slayers;
The sons of sisters will
Break blood ties.
It goes hard in the world,
There is much whoredom,
An age of axes, an age of swords;
Shields are cleft;
An age of winds, an age of wolves,
Ere the world sinks;
No man will spare
Another man.

The sons of Mimir are moving
But the end draws near,
By the sound of the ancient
Gjallarhorn.
Heimdall blows loud,
The horn is aloft;
Odin talks with
The head of Mimir.

Shakes the standing
Ash Yggdrasil;
The old tree groans,
And the Jötun (Loki) breaks loose;
All are terrified[2]
In the roads of Hel
Before the kinsman of Surt
Swallows it.

---

[1] A third bird not named lives in the halls of Hel. They represent the Jötnar, the Asar, and the third Hel (the home of the dead), and seem to be the wakers of these three different realms.

[2] The Asar, after taking Loki, bound him to a rock with fetters made of the entrails of his son, Vali (who must not be confused with his namesake, Baldr's brother).

"Now Loki was without any truce taken to a cave. They took three slabs, set them on edge, and made a hole in each. They took the sons of Loki, Vali and Nari or Narfi, and changed Vali into a wolf which tore Narfi asunder. Then they took his entrails and with them tied Loki over the three slabs; one was under his shoulders, another under his loins, the third under his knees, and these bands changed into iron. Then Skádi (a goddess) took a poisonous serpent and fastened it above him, so that the poison should drip into his face; but his wife Sigyn stands at his side, and holds a vessel under the poison-drops. When it is full she goes out to pour it down, but in the meanwhile the poison drips into his face; then he shudders so hard that the whole earth trembles; that you call earthquake. There he lies in bands till the doom of the gods" (Gylfaginning, c. 50).

"Loki begat the wolf
With Angrboda,
And Sleipnir
With Svadilföri;
One monster was thought
Most terrible of all;
It was sprung from
The brother of Býleist (= Loki)."
[Hyndluljód, 40.]

The Asar were afraid of Fenrir wolf, Loki's son, and twice tried to chain it, but could not.

"Thereupon they were afraid that they could not chain the wolf; then Allfödr (Odin) sent the servant Skírnir, the messenger of *Freg*, down to Svartálfaheim (world of the black Álfar) to some Dvergar, and had a chain made, called Gleipnir. It was made of six things: Of the noise of the cat, of the beard of women, of the roots of the mountain, of the sinews of the bear, of the breath of the fish, of the spittle of the bird."

At last they succeeded in chaining it with the chain, but Týr lost his right hand, which he was obliged to put into the mouth of the wolf as a pledge.

"When the Asar saw that the wolf

How is it with the Asar?
How is it with the Alfar?
All Jötunheim rumbles,
The Asar are at the Thing;
The Dvergar moan
Before the stone doors,
The wise ones of the rock wall[1]
Know ye all up to this and onward?

Now Garm barks loud
Before Gnipa cave;
The fetters will break,
And the wolf will run.

Hrym[2] drives from the east,
Holds his shield before him.
The Jörmungand[3] writhes
In Jötun wrath;
The serpent lashes the waves,
And the eagle screams;
The pale beak tears the corpses;
Naglfar[4] is loosened.

A keel (a ship) comes from the east,
The men of Muspell
Will come across the sea,
But Loki is the steerer;[5]

All the monsters
Go with the wolf,
The brother of Býleist (Loki)
Is in the train.

Surt comes from the south
With the *switch-harm* (fire);
The sun of the gods
Flashes from his sword;
Rocks clash,
The Jötun women stagger;
Men walk the road of Hel;
Heaven is rent asunder.

Then comes the second[6]
Sorrow of Hlin,
When Odin goes
To fight the wolf;
And the bright slayer
Of Beli[7] against Surt;
There will fall
The love of Frigg (Odin).

Now Garm barks loud
Before Gnipa-cave;
The fetters will break,
And the wolf will run.

---

was fully tied they took the band which hung on the chain and was called Gelgja, and drew it through a large slab, called Gjöll, and fastened the slab deep down in the ground. They took a large stone and put it still deeper into the ground; it was called Thviti, and they used it as a fastening pin. The wolf gaped terribly and shook itself violently, and wanted to bite them. They put into its mouth a sword; the guards touch the lower palate and the point the upper palate; that is its gag. It groans fiercely and saliva flows from its mouth and makes the river Von; there it lies till the last fight of the gods" (Later Edda, c. 34).

[1] Dvergar.

[2] Hrym. This name occurs nowhere else.

[3] Jörmungand is the world serpent, Midgard's serpent, the son of Loki.

"Angrboda was a Jötun woman in Jötunheimar. Loki begat three children by her: Fenrir wolf, Jörmungand, or Midgardsorm, the serpent, and Hel. When the gods knew that these three children were brought up in Jötunheimar, they had foretellings that great misfortune and loss would be caused by them, and all thought much evil must be expected from them, first on account of their mother, and still more of their father. Allfödr (Odin) sent the gods to take and bring them to him. When they came to him he threw the serpent (Midgardsorm) into the deep sea that lies round all lands, and it grew so much that it lies in the middle of the sea round all lands and bites its tail" (Later Edda, c. 34).

[4] "Naglfar." The ship, said in the Later Edda, Gylfaginning 51, to be made of nails of dead men; when it is finished the end of the world comes.

[5] Loki being the chief enemy of the gods.

[6] The first sorrow is not mentioned. Hlin, a maid of Frigg (see Gylfaginning, 35). Her second sorrow is the death of Odin.

[7] Slayer of Beli = Frey.

Then comes the great
Son of Sigfödr (father of victory)
Vidar to slay,
The beast of carrion.[1]
With his hand he lets
His sword pierce
The heart of the Jötun's son,[2]
Then his father (Odin) is avenged.[3]

Then comes the famous
Son of Hlodyn (Thor);
Odin's son
Goes to fight the serpent;
Midgard's defender (Thor)
Slays him in wrath;
All men will
Leave their homesteads;
The son of Fjörgyn (Thor)
Walks nine paces
Reeling from the serpent
That shuns not heinous deeds.

The sun blackens,[4]
The earth sinks into the sea;
The bright stars
Vanish from heaven;
The life-feeder (fire)
And the vapour rage;
The high heat rises
Towards heaven itself.
Now Garm barks loud[5]
Before Gnipa-cave;
The fetters will break,
And the wolf will run.

(Völuspa.)

After the destruction of the world, a new one will arise.

She[6] beholds rising up
Another time
An earth out of the sea,
An evergreen one.

The waterfalls rush;
Above an eagle flies
Which on the mountains
Catches fish.
The Asar meet
On the Idavöll (plain)
And talk about
The mighty earth-serpent
And there speak of
The great events
And of the old runes
Of Fimbultyr.

---

[1] The wolf Fenrir.

[2] Loki is the father of Fenrir-wolf, who is called the Jötun's son, as Loki was a Jötun.

[3] Odin's son, Vidar, avenges his father by slaying the Fenrir-wolf.

[4] Here the Völva again sees how everything is destroyed. Ragnarök, "the doom of the powers and the end of the world," is mentioned in Lokasenna where Loki is taunting the gods; when he comes to Tyr, the latter answers him—

I have no hand
And thou hast no praise;
We are both badly off;
Nor is the wolf well
That in bands shall
Wait for Ragnarök.

In Atlamal Ragnarök is also mentioned in the dreams of Glaumvor (see p. 462). In the later Edda the word is corrupted by having an "r" added, which gives the meaning of *twilight* instead of *doom* of the gods, as it really meant.

[5] The Völva seems never to tire reminding her hearers that the dog Garm barks loud, &c.

[6] The Völva.

CHAPTER V.

MYTHOLOGY AND COSMOGONY—*continued.*

Norse Cosmogony—Midgard, Asgard, and Mannheim—The Asar and Vanir —Thor and Tyr—The Goddesses—The Apples of Youth.

WHERE the mythical Odin ends in the Völuspa, if there is any ending to him, is impossible to tell; it appears that he came and built an earthly *Midgard*,[1] according to the writer of the Later Edda who gives the tradition and belief of the people in his day.

Odin himself was originally a Jötun, and it would appear from the mythological literature of the North that, for some reason, he wished to found a new religion, and desired to proclaim himself chief and spiritual ruler over several, if not all the tribes before mentioned; this claim, from the account of the fights which took place, must have been hotly contested. In the history of the birth of every nation, something similar has taken place, and these struggles are always described with wonderful and often supernatural accompaniments. We are led to believe that a devoted band of followers attached themselves to Odin's cause, and gradually others joined him; thus forming a community over which he was the leader. To protect themselves from their enemies, among whom, according to the Eddas, were included Jötnar and Thursar, &c., the Asar erected a wall round their country, and called the whole enclosed land Midgard.

In the centre of Midgard, Odin built for himself, his family, chiefs, and councillors, *Asgard*,[2] called also Asaheim (home of the Asar), and Godheim (home of the gods). *As*, in the Northern language, afterwards denoted one of the gods, who

[1] Midgard—*midr*, middle; *gardr*, yard, enclosed space; also, courtyard and premises; a house in a village or town; a stronghold; a fence or wall; a collection of houses, a farm.

[2] Asgard in olden times meant a place surrounded by walls, and also a collection of houses enclosed by a fence, hence the modern name in Scandinavia of gård for farm. The residence of the gods is also called by this name in the Edda.

in course of time were also deified, and to whom, as well as to Odin, sacrifices were offered.

Within the walls of Midgard, which encircled Asgard, was *Mannheim*,[1] where Odin's adherents dwelt, and hence the name of their country.

"They gave them clothes and names; the men they called Ash, and the women Embla. From them all mankind is descended, and a dwelling-place was given them under Midgard. In the next place the sons of Bör made for themselves, in the middle of the world, a burgh which is called Asgard, and which we call Troja (there dwelt the gods of their race), and thence resulted many tidings and adventures, both on earth and in the sky. In Asgard is a place called Hlidskjalf, and when Odin seats himself there in the high seat he sees all over the whole world, and what every man is doing, and he knew all things that he saw. His wife was Frigg, and she was the daughter of Fjorgvin, and from their offspring are descended the race which we call *Asar*, who inhabited Asgard the ancient, the realm that surrounds it, and all that race are known to be gods, and for that reason Odin is called Allfather" (Later Edda).

After Midgard had been built for the sons of men, there is a golden age on the *Ida-völl* (plain of movement). Altars and hearths were raised by the Asar, showing that work is conducive to happiness.

They played chess on the grass-plot;
They were cheerful;
They did not lack
Anything of gold
Until three
Very mighty
Thurs maidens came (Nornir)
From Jotunheim.

The Asar met,
Who raised on the Idavoll
Altars and high temples;
They laid hearths,
They wrought wealth,
They shaped tongs,
And made tools.

Then followed a great battle between the Asar and their neighbours, the Vanir. The Asar seem to have been at first defeated, but afterwards made peace. This fight is the most obscure part of the whole of Völuspa.

That fight remembers she
First in the world,
When they pierced
Gullveig[2] with spears,

[1] *Mannheimar* (always in plural *mannheimar*, the singular is *mannheim*) means homes of men.

[2] The word *Gullveig* is only found as a compound word this once in the literature of the North. *Gull* = gold; *veig*

And burnt her
In the hall of Hár;[1]
Thrice they burnt
The thrice-born one,
Yet still she lives.

Then all the gods went
To their judgment seats,
The most holy gods,
And counselled about
Whether the Asar shou'd
Tribute pay,[2]
Or if all the gods
Should have a feast.

Odin had hurled the spear
And shot at the host;
That was moreover the first
Fight in the world.
Broken was the timber wall[3]
Of the Asa-burgh;
The war-exposed plains
The Vanir trampled on.

A fight is also mentioned in the Ynglinga Saga which seems to be the same as the one referred to in Völuspa.

"Odin went with a host against the Vanir, but they withstood him well and defended their land. Asar and Vanir got the victory by turns; each waged war in the other's land and plundered. When they became tired of this they appointed a meeting for agreement between themselves, and made peace and gave each other hostages. The Vanir gave their foremost men, Njörd the wealthy and his son Frey, and the Asar gave a man called Hœnir, and said he was well fitted to be a chief. He was a tall and very handsome man. The Asar sent with him a man called Mimir, who was very wise; in exchange for him the Vanir gave one, who was the wisest among them, called Kvasir. When Hœnir came to Vanaheim he was at once made chief; Mimir taught him everything. And when Hœnir was at the Things or meetings, and Mimir was not near, and some difficult cases were taken to him, he always gave the same answer, 'Let others say what is to be done.' Then the Vanir suspected that the Asar had deceived them in the exchange of men. They took Mimir and beheaded him and sent his head to the Asar. Odin took the head and besmeared it with the juice of plants, so that it could not rot. He sang charms over it, and by spells made it so powerful that it spoke with him, and told him many unknown things" (Ynglinga, c. 4).

= draught, also strength. It may be a metaphor for the thirst of gold being the root of evil, and the cause of the first fight and manslaying in the world, as the thirst is never dying.

[1] Hár = Odin.

[2] Here evidently the reference is to the war between the Vanir and the Asar. This shows that they had been defeated. Feast means sacrifice, which was always followed by the feast; this would imply that they wanted to make a sacrifice for peace or victory.

[3] A stockade made like Danavirki or other strongholds in the north.

Thór was one of the greatest of the Norse gods after Odin; indeed, these with Frey formed a sort of triad.

"Thór is the foremost of them (the gods); he is called Asa-Thór or Öku-Thór. He is the strongest of all gods and men. His realm is Thrúdvángar (= plains of strength), and his hall is called Bilskirnir; in it there are 540 rooms. It is the largest house built by men. (See Grimnismal.) Thór owns two he-goats, which are called Tanngnjóst (tooth-gnasher) and Tanngrisnir (tooth-gnasher), and a chariot (reid), on which he drives and the he-goats draw it. Therefore he is called Oku-Thór (= the driving Thór). He also owns three costly things. One of them is the hammer Mjolnir which the Hrim Thursar and Berg Risar know when it is aloft, and that is not strange, for he has broken many a head of their fathers or kinsmen. The next best of his costly things is the belt of strength. When he girds himself with it his Asa-strength doubles. He owns a third thing, which is worth much, iron-gloves, without which he cannot hold the handle of the hammer. No man is so wise that he may reckon up all his great feats, but I can tell thee so many tales of him that the hours will be [illegible]led away before I have told all that I know."

[illegible]lár said: 'Furthermore there is an As called Týr. He is [illegible]oldest and most daring and has much power over victory [illegible]attles. It is useful for valiant men to make vows to him. [illegible]s a saying that the one surpassing others in valour and [illegible]ing nothing is Týbrave. He is so wise that the wisest [illegible]n is called Týwise. One of the proofs of his daring is this. [illegible]hen the Asar persuaded the Fenriswolf to allow them to tie [illegible] with the chain Gleipnir, it did not believe that they would [illegible]ntie it till they laid Týr's hand into its mouth as a pledge. When they would not untie it then it bit off his hand at the [illegible]lace now called Wolf-joint (wrist). He is therefore onehanded [illegible]nd said not to be the reconciler of men'" (Later Edda, [illegible]ylfaginning, 21).

The Later Edda differs from the Grimnismal in giving the [illegible]umber of gods or Asar which it mentions. When Gylfi asks [illegible]ow many Asar there are he is told twelve, and the names of [illegible]Odin, Höd, and Baldr are omitted from the list. Only a few of [illegible]hese gods seem to have been of sufficient prominence to have [illegible]had sacrifices offered to them, as is seen in the chapter on Religion, and we cannot depend on the Later Edda for reliable information concerning them.

"The Asar went to their feast, and the twelve Asar who were to be judges sat down in the highseats; their names were—Thór, Njörd, Frey, Týr, Heimdall, Bragi, Vidar, Vali, Ull, Hœnir, Forseti, Loki" (Later Edda).

The following extract from the Later Edda gives us the names of the principal goddesses, with their leading characteristics.

"Gangleri said: 'Who are the Asynjar?' Har answered: 'Frigg is the highest; she has a very splendid house called *Fensalir*. The second is Sága, who lives at Sökkvabekk, a large place. The third is Eir; she is the most skilled healer (=physician). The fourth is Gefjon, who is a maiden, and those who die as maidens wait upon her. The fifth is Fulla; she is also a maiden with loose hair, and wears a golden band round her head; she carries the ashen box of Frigg and takes care of her shoe-clothes (=shoes and stockings), and partakes in her secret counsels. Freyja is next in rank to Frigg; she is married to a man called Ód, their daughter is Hnoss; she is so beautiful that fine and costly things are called after her—hnoss. Ód went far off and Freyja weeping, and her tears are red gold. She has names; that is because she called herself by different when she went among foreign nations in search of she is called Mardöll, Hörn, Gefn, and Sýr. She owns *Brisinga* necklace. She is called *Vanadis* (dis (goddess) the Vanir). The seventh is Sjöfn; she applies herself mu to turning the minds of men to love, both males and female from her name a loving mind is called *sjafni*. Lofn is s mild and good to invoke that she gets Allföðr (Ódin) or Frigg to allow the marriages of men, male and female, though they have been forbidden or flatly refused; from her name is lof (leave), and that which is lofat (= praised) by men. Vár listens to the oaths of men and the private agreements whic men and women make between themselves; these are called *várar*, and she punishes those who break them. Vör is wise and asks many questions, so that nothing can be hidden fro her; when a woman knows a thing she is *vör* (= aware) o it. Syn guards the door of the hall (Valhalla) and shuts it to those who are not to enter; therefore when some one denies a thing he is said to put down *syn* (= negation, refuse). Hlin has to guard the men whom Frigg wishes to save from danger. Snotra is wise and of good manners; a wise man or woman is called *snotr* from her name. Gna, Frigg sends into various worlds on her errands; she has a horse which runs

on air and water, called *Hófhvarfnir* (= hoof-turner)" ('Later Edda,' Gylfaginning, 35).

The gods, it would seem, had it in their power, if not to secure everlasting life, at least to retain perpetual youth, unlike poor Tithonus of the well-known Greek myth. It may not be inappropriate to continue here the legend relating to this. Idun, the wife of Bragi, who was celebrated for his wisdom and eloquence, kept in a box the apples which when the gods felt old age approaching they ate in order that they might keep their youth till Ragnarök.

"Odin, Loki and Hœnir went from home over mountains and uninhabited land, and it was not easy for them to get food. When they came down into a valley they saw a herd of oxen, took one of them and prepared it for the fire. When they thought it was cooked they took it off, but it was not cooked. A second time, after waiting a little, they took it off, and it was not cooked. They considered what might be the cause of this. Then they heard a voice in the tree above them which said that he who sat there caused this. They looked up, and a large eagle sat there. The eagle said: 'If you will give me my fill of the ox, it shall be cooked.' They assented, and the bird came slowly down from the tree, sat down on the hearth, and at once gobbled up the four shoulder-pieces of the ox. Loki got angry, took a large pole, raised it, and with all his strength struck the eagle. At the blow the eagle flew into the air. The pole adhered to its body, and the hands of Loki to one end of it. The eagle flew so that Loki's feet touched the rocks, the stone-heaps and the trees. He thought his hands would be torn from his shoulders. He shouted, eagerly asking the eagle to spare him, but it answered that Loki would never get loose unless he swore to make Idun leave Asgard with her apples. Loki promised this, got loose and went to his companions, and no more tidings are told about their journey till they reached home. At the appointed time Loki enticed Idun to go to a wood out of Asgard by saying he had found apples which she would prefer to her own, and asked her to take her own apples with her to compare them. Thjassi Jötun then came in an eagle's shape and took Idun and flew away to his abode in Thrymheim. The Asar were much grieved at the disappearance of Idun, and soon became grey-haired and old. They held a *Thing* and asked each other for news of Idun. The last seen of her was when she walked out of Asgard with Loki. He was brought to the *Thing* and threatened with death or

torture. He got afraid and said he would fetch Idun from Jötunheim, if Freyja would lend him the hawk-skin which she owned. When he got it he flew north to Jötunheim, and one day came to Thjassi Jötun, who was sea-fishing. Idun was alone at home. Loki changed her into a nut, held her in his claws and flew as fast as he could. When the Asar saw the hawk flying with the nut and the eagle pursuing they went to the Asgard-wall and carried thither bundles of plane-shavings. When the hawk flew into the burgh it came down at the wall. The Asar set fire to the plane-shavings, but the eagle could not stop when it lost the hawk, and the fire caught its feathers and stopped it. The Asar were near, and slew Thjassi inside the Asgard-wall, which is a very famous deed. Skadi, his daughter, took helmet and brynja and a complete war-dress, and went to Asgard to avenge her father. The Asar offered her reconciliation and *wergild*,[1] and first that she might choose a husband from among them, not seeing more than their feet. She saw a pair of very beautiful feet, and said: 'This one I choose; few things can be ugly in Baldr.' But it was Njörd of Nóatún." (Later Edda, Bragarœdur, c. 56.)

[1] Wergild, indemnity.

CHAPTER VI.

ODIN OF THE NORTH.

The Odin of the North—The forefathers of the English—Their migration from the shores of the Black Sea—The geographical knowledge of the Norsemen—Tyrkland the home of Odin—Sigrlami, one of the sons of Odin—Odin establishes his family in the North—Death of Odin in the North—Attributes of Odin—Poetical names of Odin—Sleipnir, the horse of Odin—Odin as a one-eyed man.

In the Norse literature we find Odin referred to not only as a god, but as a hero and leader of men. It is not necessary to believe that any real person of the name of Odin ever existed, but from the frequency with which a migration northwards is mentioned, and from the details with which it is described, it is legitimate to infer that the predecessor of the Norsemen came from the south or south-east of Europe—probably, to judge from literature and archæology combined, from the shores of the Black Sea.

At the time of Odin's arrival in the North we find not only a country called Gardariki, which is often mentioned in the Sagas, and seems to have adjoined the south-eastern shores of the Baltic, but also the large Scandinavian peninsula and that of Jutland, and the islands and shores of the Baltic, populated by a seafaring people whose tribes had constant intercourse with each other, and, to judge by the finds, seem to have had an identical religion. These people intermarried with the Asar who came north with Odin, and hence arose tribes called half-Risar and half-Troll.

"It is written in old books that Alfheimar[1] were north in Gandvik and Ymisland, between it and Hálogaland. And before the Tyrkjar and Asiamen came to the Northern lands, Risar and half-Risar lived there; then the nations (peoples)

[1] Alfheimar. In one text, Jötunheimar. In later times Risar, Troll, and Dvergar became synonymous with giants, dwarfs, and wizards.

were much mixed together; the Risar got wives from Mannheimar, and some of them married their daughters there" (Hervarar Saga, ch. i.).

The account given in the Hervarar Saga agrees with that in the Ynglinga Saga, which is important not only as giving an idea of the conception the people of the North had of our world, but as describing the names of the lands and countries mentioned in the earlier Eddas and Sagas.

"The round of the world on which men dwell is much cut by the sea; large seas stretch from the outer sea round the earth into the land. It is known that a sea runs from Njörvasund (Straits of Gibraltar) all the way up to Jorsalaland (the land of Jerusalem). From it a long bay runs north-east, called the Black Sea, which separates the three parts of the world; the part east of it is called Asia, but the one west of it is called Europa by some, and Enea by others. North of the Black Sea is the great or the cold Sweden; some say that Sweden is no smaller than Serkland (the land of Saracens) the great; some say she is as large as Blaland (the land of the blue (black) men) the great. The northern part of Sweden is uninhabited, on account of frost and cold, as the southern part of Blaland is on account of the sun's burning heat. In Sweden there are many large herads (districts).

"There are also many kinds of people and many tongues; there are Asar, Dvergar, and Blamenn (blue (black) men), and many kinds of strange people; there are beasts and dragons wonderfully large. From the north, in mountains which are beyond all settlements, a river springs that flows through Sweden; its right name is Tanais; it was in old times called Tanakvísl,[1] or Vana-kvísl; it flows into the Black Sea. The land round Vanakvísl was then called Vanaland or Vanaheim (home or world of the Vanir). This river[2] separates the two-thirds of the world; east of it is Asia, and west of it is Europa" (Ynglinga Saga, 1).

"A large mountain ridge runs from north-east to south-west; it separates Sweden the Great[3] from other lands. South of the mountain, not far off, is Tyrkland; there Odin owned a great deal of land. At that time the chief

[1] Kvisl—a forked river, one of the forks where they unite—it also means a branch of a tree.

Vana-kvisl means the river of the Vanir; it is supposed now that it was the river Don which flows into the Sea of Azow, but it is doubtful.

[2] This was probably the river Don which is near the Ural Mountains.

[3] Svíthjód the Great seems to be Russia—Norway, Sweden, perhaps Denmark and the shores of the Baltic.

of the Rómverjar (Romans) went widely about the world and underlaid (conquered) all nations; and many chiefs on that account left their lands. As Odin was foreknowing and skilled in witchcraft he knew that his descendants would live in the northern part of the world. Then he set his brothers Vili, and Vé to rule Asgard; he left, and all the Díar with him and many folk. First he went westwards to Gardaríki, then southwards to Saxland. He had many sons; he became owner of land at many places in Saxland, and left his sons to defend Saxland. Then he went northwards to the sea and settled on an island; that place is now called Odinsey (Odin's island) in Fjón (Fýen). Then he sent Gefjon[1] northwards across the Sound to discover lands; she came to Gylfi, and he gave her one plough-land. Then she went to Jötunheim and there got four sons by a Jötun; she changed them into oxen, and harnessed them to the plough, and drew the land out to sea, and westwards, opposite to Odinsey, and the land is called Selund (Zealand); she afterwards lived there. Skjöld, a son of Odin, married her; they lived at Hleidra (Leire). There is a lake or sea called Lög (Mälaren). The fjords in the Lög lie as the nesses in Selund When Odin heard that Gylfi's land was good he went there, and he and Gylfi made an agreement, for Gylfi thought he had not strength enough to withstand the Asar. Many devices and spells did Odin and Gylfi use against each other, and the Asar always got the better of them. Odin took up his abode at the Lög (Mälaren), which is now called the old Sigtúnir; there he made a great temple and sacrificed according to the custom of the Asar. He gave abodes to the temple-priests; Njörd lived at Nóatún, Frey at Uppsalir, Heimdall at Himinbjörg, Thor at Thrúdvang, Baldr at Breidablik; he gave good abodes to them all" (Ynglinga, c. 5).

While Odin, according to the sages, was in Sweden[2] his son Sigrlami ruled over Gardaríki; during the life of his father or after his death he had to fight against the Jötnar, and, like Skjöld his brother, he married a daughter of King Gylfi, who ruled over the present Sweden, whose authority is made to extend to the principal islands which form part of the present Denmark.

"At this time the Asia-men and Tyrkjar came from the east and settled in the northern lands; their leader was

[1] Gefjon was one of the Asynjur.

[2] Svithjód = Sweden, but it can hardly be taken in these early Sagas as exactly corresponding to modern Sweden.

called Odin; he had many sons, and they all became great and strong men. One of his sons was called Sigrlami; to him Odin gave the realm now called Gardaríki; he became a great chief over that land; he was handsomer than any man. He was married to Heid, the daughter of King Gylfi; they had a son called Svafrlami" (Hervarar, c. 2).

"Sigrlami fell in a fight against Thjassi the Jötun. When Svafrlami heard of his father's death he took for himself all his realm, and became a powerful man. It is said that on one occasion when riding in a forest he chased a stag for a long time, and did not kill it until sunset, when he had ridden so far into the forest that he lost his way. He saw a large stone and two Dvergar beside it, whom he was going to sacrifice to the gods, but on their begging to be allowed to give a ransom for their lives Svafrlami asked their names. One was called Dyrin, the other Dvalin. Svafrlami at once recognised them to be the most skilful of Dvergar, and insisted upon their making a sword for him, the hilt to be of gold, and the scabbard to be ornamented and inlaid with gold. The sword was never to fail, and never to rust; to cut iron and stone as well as cloth; and it was to bring victory in all battles and duels (einvigi) to every one who carried it.

"On the appointed day Svafrlami came to the rock; the Dvergar gave him the sword; but Dvalin, standing in the door of the stone, said: 'Thy sword, Svafrlami, shall be a man's bane (death) every time it is drawn; and with it shall be performed the greatest nithing's deed; it also will be thy death.' Svafrlami then struck at the Dvergar so that both edges of the sword entered into the rock, but the Dvergar ran into the rock. Svafrlami, we are told, called the sword Tyrfing, and carried it in battles and single fights; with it he killed in a duel Thjassi the Jötun, his father's slayer, whose daughter Frid he married" (Hervarar Saga, c. 3).

We not only have accounts of how this Odin established his family in the North, but also how he died there. Feeling that his days were coming to an end, he prepared to die on a pyre, as was the custom of those times; and we find the belief existed that after his death he returned to the old Asgard.

"Odin fell sick and died in Sweden. When he was at death's door he let himself be marked (wounded) with a spear-point, and said he was the owner of all the men slain by weapons, and would go into Godheim (the world of the gods),

and there welcome his friends. Now the Swedes thought he had gone to the old Asgard, and would live there for ever. Then there again arose worship of Odin, and vows were made to him. The Swedes often thought he appeared to them in dreams on the eve of great battles; to some he gave victory, others he invited home; either of these alternatives was considered good. After death he was burnt with great splendour.[1] It was their belief that the higher the smoke rose in the air the more glorious would the burnt man be in heaven,[2] and the more property that was burnt with him the wealthier would he be" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 10).

Whether a hero and leader of the name of Odin ever lived or not we cannot tell, but that we know from the records the people believed that he and the Asar had existed, and the creed they had established was their religion; and this belief lasted with many to the end of the pagan era, which did not entirely disappear till the twelfth century. Odin and some of the Asar were deified and worshipped in all the countries of the North, and with the lapse of time their fame increased.

"Odin was a mighty warrior and travelled far and wide, and became owner of many realms (countries). He was so successful that in every battle he gained the victory, and at last his men believed that in every battle victory was in his power. It was his custom, when he sent his men into fight or on other errands, first to lay his hands on their heads and give them bjanak;[3] they believed that luck would then be with them. Also it happened that whenever his men were in need on land or at sea they called on his name, and always felt relieved by it; for every kind of help they looked to him. He often went so far away that he was on a journey many seasons" (Ynglinga, c. 2).

"It is said with truth that when Asa-Odin, and with him the Díar,[4] came into the northern lands, they began and taught those ídróttir[5] which men afterwards long practised. Odin was the foremost of them all, and from him they learned the *ídróttir*, for he first knew them all, and more than any other. He was highly honoured on account of the following things. He looked so fair and noble when he sat with his friends that

[1] People were buried with their wealth.

[2] The one who owned the burning in the text. Heaven means space, not a blessed abode.

[3] This word is not found elsewhere in Scandinavian literature.

[4] See priest.

[5] Idróttir, a name for all kinds of athletic and intellectual games.

every mind was delighted; but when he was in a host, then he looked fierce to his foes. This was because he knew the ídróttir of changing looks and shapes in any way he liked. Another of his ídróttir was that he spoke with such skill and so glibly that all who listened thought it the only truth; he always spoke in poetry (hendingar) like that which now is called skáldskap (skaldship, poetry). He and his temple-priests are called Ljódasmidir (lay-smiths, song-smiths), for that ídrótt came from them into the northern lands. Odin had power to cause his foes to grow blind or deaf or full of fear, and to make their weapons bite no more than wands (sticks of wood). His own men fought without armour madly, like dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and had the strength of a bear or bull; they cut down the foe, and neither fire nor iron hurt them. That is called berserksgang (rage or fury of Berserks)" (Ynglinga, c. 6–7).

In the poetical language of the Sagas and Eddas a very great number of figurative names are given to Odin, which show how numerous his attributes were believed to be, and many of which recall the language of Homer; among them we may mention:—

The thunderer.[1]
Father of ages.
The wise walker.
The lord.
The helmet bearer.
The cheerful.
The loving one.
The high one.
The fickle.
The true-guessing one.
The evil-eyed.
The manifold.
The wise in beguiling.
The much knowing.
The father of victory.
The father of the slain.
The conqueror in fights.
The entangler.
The feared one.
The rover.
The serpent (from his being able to assume its shape).
The soother.
God of the hanged.[2]
God of the ravens.
God of victory.
God of the Gautar.
The shouting god.
The one-eyed one.
The fierce one.
God of the earth.
Friend of Mimir.
The foe of the Fenrir-wolf.
The lord of the spears.
The god of hosts.
The father of all.
The wish-god.
The wind-whispering.
The burner.
The wide-ruling.
The work-skilled.
The swift-riding.
The god of battle.
The almighty god.
The host blinder.
The true one.
The long-bearded.
The god of cargoes.
The father of hosts.
The useful adviser.
The shaper of battle.
The swift rider.

"Then Thridi said: Odin is the highest and oldest of the Asar; he rules over everything, and, however mighty the

[1] We must here remark that nowhere is Thor called the God of Thunder.
[2] See Havamal, the lord of the gallows; see Havamal where he is said to have hung on a tree.

other gods are, they all serve him as children a father. Frigg, his wife, knows the fates of men though she cannot prophesy. Odin is called Allfödr, because he is the father of all the gods; he is also called Valfödr, because all those who fall in battle (valr = the slain) are his chosen sons. These he places in Valhöll and Vingólf (a hall owned by the goddesses), and then they are called Einherjar. He is also called Hanga-gud (god of the hanged), Hapta-gud (god of the chained), and Farma-gud (god of cargoes), and he gave himself still more names when he was at King Geirröd's. Gangleri said: 'Wonderfully many names have you given to him, and surely it needs great wisdom to know the events which are the reasons of every one of these names.' Hár answered: 'Great wits are needed to explain this carefully, but, to tell it shortly, most of the names have been given because, as there are many different tongues in the world, every nation thinks it necessary to change his name according to their language, that they may invoke and pray to him for themselves. His journeys have given rise to some of these names, and they are told among people'" (Later Edda, c. 20).

"Two ravens[1] sit on his shoulders and tell into his ears all the tidings, which they see or hear; these are Hugin and Munin. At the dawn of day he sends them out to fly all over the world, and they come back at day-meal time (the biggest meal of the day); hence he knows many tidings; therefore he is called Hrafnagud (Raven-god)" (Gylfaginning, c. 38).

Among the earlier myths connected with Odin may be mentioned the following account of the origin of his horse Sleipnir.

"Gangleri asked: 'Who owns Sleipnir the horse, or what hast thou to tell of him?' Hár answered: 'Thou knowest nothing about Sleipnir nor whence he sprang, but it will seem

[1] Grimnismál, 19–20, also mentions these ravens.

19.

The battle-tamer (Odin) feeds
Geri and Freki,
The famous father of hosts (Herjafödr)
And by wine alone
The weapon-famous
Odin always lives.

20

Hugin and Munin
Fly every day
Over the wide earth;
I am afraid Hugin
Will not come back,
But still more of Munin.

Poetical names were given to these ravens by Eyvind Skalda-spillir; they are called the Swans of Farmatýr (the god of cargoes), *i.e.*, the Swans of Odin.

to thee worth a hearing. In early times when the gods had built up Midgard and made Valhalla there came a smith who offered to make a burgh for them in three seasons (half-years) so good that it would be strong and safe against

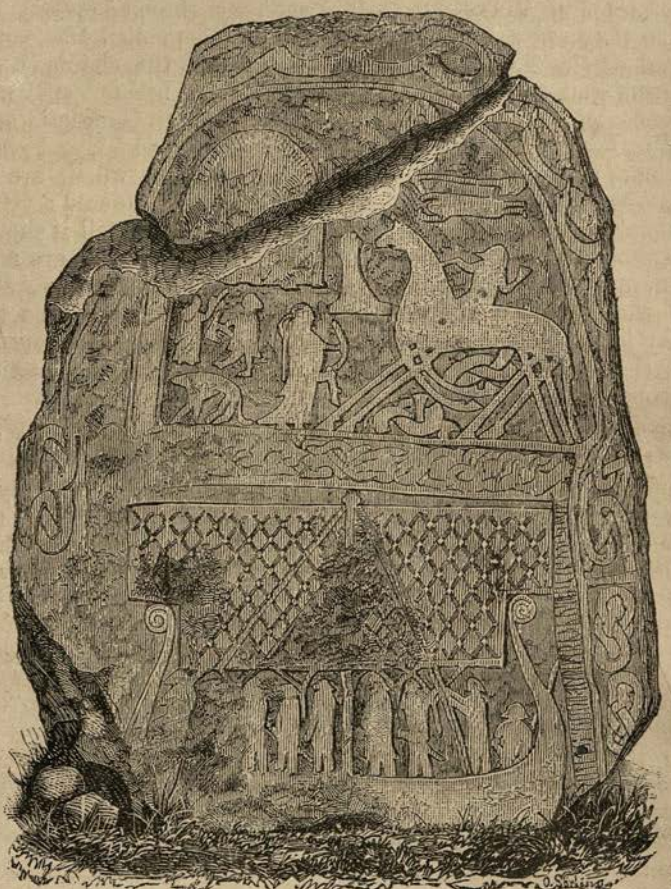


Fig. 1.—Earlier runic stone at Tjängvide, Götland, with the eight-footed horse of Od —Height about 5 feet; width, 4 feet 4 inches; thickness, 1 foot. Another simil stone with representation (in relief) of an eight-footed horse has been found a in Laivide in Götland.

Bergrisar (mountain-jötnar) and Hrimthursar, though the entered Midgard. In the place of wages he wanted to marr Freyja and get the sun and moon. The Asar came togethe to counsel among themselves, and it was agreed with th

smith that he should get what he wanted if he could make the burgh in one winter, but if any part of it was unfinished on the first day of summer he was to lose his pay; he would not be allowed to use the help of any man in the work. When they told him these conditions he asked leave to make use of his horse Svadilföri; on the advice of Loki this was conceded to him. The first day of winter he began to build the burgh, and during night he carried stones on his horse to it; the Asar wondered much how the horse could drag such large rocks, and it did much more work than the smith. Strong witnesses were brought and many oaths were taken at their agreement, because the jötun thought it unsafe to stay with the Asar if Thor, who had gone to Austrveg (eastern countries) to kill Jötnar, should come home. As the winter passed the building of the burgh proceeded, and it was so high and strong that it could not be taken. When three days of the winter were left it was almost all finished except the gate. Then the gods sat down on their judgment-seats and tried to find an expedient; one asked the other on whose advice Freyja was to be married in Jötunheimar and air and heaven defiled by taking sun and moon away and giving them to the Jötnar; they all agreed that the causer of most evils, Loki Lanfeyjarson, had caused this, and that he deserved an evil death if he did not find a way to cause the smith to lose his pay. They rushed at Loki, who got afraid, and took oaths that he would manage, whatever it might cost him, that the smith should lose his pay. The same evening when the smith drove out with his horse Svadilföri, to fetch stones, a mare ran out of the wood towards it and neighed to it. When the stallion saw what kind of horse this was he got wild, tore his ropes and ran towards it; the mare ran into the wood, and the smith followed and wanted to get hold of it, but the horses continued running all night, and no work was done that night; next day, as before, the work did not proceed. When the smith saw that the work could not be finished he got into Jötun-fury. When the Asar knew for certain that he was a Bergrisar (mountain jötun), they could not keep their oaths and called Thor; he came at once, and then the hammer Mjollnir went aloft; he paid him for the work, not by giving him the sun and moon, but by preventing him from living in Jötunheimar; at his first blow the jötun's skull was broken into small bits, and he was sent down to Nifl-hel. But Loki had had such dealings with Svadilföri that he gave birth to a foal; it was grey, and with eight feet, and it is the best horse among gods and men" (Gylfaginning, 41–42).

Odin was believed not only to give victory to his favourites, but other gifts, and is represented as coming to the aid of his followers, in the guise of an one-eyed old man—

Ride shall we
To Valhalla,
To the holy place.
Let us ask the father of hosts
To be kind (to us);
He pays and gives
Gold to his host;
He gave to Hermód
A helmet and brynja,
And to Sigmund
He gave a sword.
He gives victory to his sons,
And wealth to some;
Eloquence to many,
And wisdom to men;
Fair winds to warriors,
And song to poets,
And luck in love
To many a man.

She (Freyja) will worship Thór,
And ask him
That he always
Be at peace with thee;
Though he is no friend
To the jötun-brides.[1]

[Hyndluljód.]

"King Siggeir ruled Gautland; he was powerful and had many men; he went to King Völsung and asked him to give Signy to him in marriage. The king and his sons received this offer well; she herself was willing, but asked her father to have his way in this as in other things referring to herself. Her father made up his mind that she should be married, and she was betrothed to Siggeir. The wedding-feast was to be at King Völsung's, and Siggeir was to come to him. The king prepared as good a feast as he could. When it was ready the guests and Siggeir's men came on the appointed day; Siggeir had many men of rank with him. It is said that great fires were made along the hall,[2] and the large tree before mentioned stood in the middle of the hall, and that when men were sitting before the fires in the evening a man walked into the hall whom they did not know. He wore a spotted hekl(frock); he was barefooted, and had linen breeches fastened t his legs; he had a sword in his hand, and wore a hood lo down over his face; he was very grey-haired, and looked o and was one-eyed.[3] He went to the tree, and drew the swo and stuck it into the trunk so that it sank up to the hilt. man dared to speak to him. He said: 'He who pulls t sword out of the trunk shall get it as a gift from me, and w find that he never had a better sword in his hand than t one.' The old man then went out, and no one knew who was, or where he went. Then all the foremost men tried

[1] Because he was always fighting against the Jötnar.

[2] The fires were always in the centre, lengthwise.

[3] This man was Odin, who is alwa represented as having only one eye.

pull out the sword, and could not. Sigmund, the son of King Völsung, pulled it out as easily as if it had been quite loose. No man had seen so good a sword, and Siggeir offered three times its weight in gold for it. Sigmund answered that he should have pulled it out; now he should never get it, though he offered all the gold he owned" (Volsunga, c. 3).[1]

Of Odin it is said

"Odin changed shapes; then his body lay as if sleeping or dead, and he was in the shape of a bird or a beast, a fish or a serpent, and in the twinkling of an eye went into far-off lands on his own errands or on those of other men. Besides, he could, with words only, extinguish fire, calm the sea, and turn the winds into whatever direction he wished. He had a ship called Skídbladnir, on which he crossed large seas; it could be folded together like cloth.[2] He had with him Mimir's head, which told him many tidings (news) from other worlds. Sometimes he raised (awaked) dead men out of the earth (ground), or sat down beneath hanged men (hanging in gallows);[3] therefore he was called the lord (dróttin) of the ghosts or of the hanged.[3] He had two ravens, which he taught to speak, and they flew far and wide over lands (countries) and told him many tidings. Therefore he became very wise. So much lewdness followed this witchcraft when it was practised that it was thought a disgrace for men to practise it; and the priestesses (gydjur) were taught the idrótt. Odin knew where property was hidden in the ground, and he knew songs by which he unlocked (opened) the earth, the rocks, and the stones, and the mounds, and bound (held fast) with mere words those who dwelt in them, and went in and took what he wished. On account of these powers he became very famous; his foes feared him, but his friends trusted in him and believed in him and his power. He taught most of his idróttir to the sacrificing-priests; they were next to him in all wisdom and witchcraft. Many others, however, learned a great deal of them, and from them witchcraft has spread widely and been kept up long. But men worshipped Odin and the twelve chiefs (höfdingi) and called them their gods, and believed in them long afterwards" (Ynglinga Saga, ch. 7).

[1] Cfr. also Volsunga Saga, c. 11.

[2] The story of Odin's ship reminds one of the tent mentioned in the 'Arabian Nights,' which could cover an army, and yet could be folded and carried in a small pocket.

[3] Odin himself hung in Yggdrasil to learn wisdom, and this is a like custom (Havamal, 139); it seems that Odin learned wisdom from the one hanging in the gallows by sitting under it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUCCESSORS OF ODIN OF THE NORTH.

Njörd the successor of Odin—Frey succeeds Njörd—A great temple built at Uppsalir by Frey—The ship of Frey—Death of Frey—Frey's death kept secret from the people—Freyja, the priestess—Fjölnir, the son of Yngvi Frey—Svegdir—Genealogies of the Norse chiefs from Odin Skjöld, the founder of the Danish branch of chiefs.

ACCORDING to the sagas, after the death of Odin, Njörd of Nóatún became the ruler of the Swedes.

"Thereupon Njörd of Nóatún became ruler over the Swedes, and continued the sacrifices; the Swedes called him their dróttin (lord); he gathered taxes from them. In his days there was very good peace, and seasons were so good in every respect that the Swedes believed that Njörd ruled over good seasons and the wealth and welfare of men. In his days most of the Díar died, and all of them were afterwards burnt and sacrificed to. Njörd fell sick and died; he also let himself be marked (with a spear) before he died, as a token that he belonged to Odin. The Swedes burnt him, and wept very much over his mound" (Ynglinga, c. 11).

"Njörd of Nóatún then begat two children. His son was Frey and his daughter Freyja. They were beautiful in looks and mighty. Frey is best of the Ásar. He rules the rain and the sunshine, and also has power over the growth of the ground. It is good to make vows to him for good seasons and peace. He also rules over men's fortune in property." (Gylfaginning, c. 24.)

In Vafthrudnismal Odin asks Vafthrudnir the origin of Njörd.

Odin.

Tell me . . .
Whence Njörd came
Among the sons of Asar;
He rules hundred-fold
Temples and altars
And he was not born among Asar.

Vafthrudnir.

In Vanaheim
The wise powers shaped him,
And gave him to the gods as a hostage;
At the doom of the world
He will come back again,
Home to the wise Vanir.

The Njörd who is related to have been punished by uncontrollable sadness for falling in love with Gerd and sitting on Odin's high-seat is a mythical Njörd.

"A man was called Gýmir whose wife Orboda was of Berg (mountain) Risar kin. Their daughter Gerd was the most beautiful of all women. One day Frey had gone to *Hlidskjalf*[1] and could see over all worlds. When he looked to the North he saw on a farm a large and fine house towards which a woman was walking. When she lifted her arms, opening the door, a light shone from them on the sea, and the air and all worlds were brightened from her. His great boldness in sitting down in the holy seat thus was revenged upon him, for he went away, full of sorrow. When he came home he did not speak or sleep or drink and no one dared question him. Then Njörd called to him Skirnir, the shoe-boy of Frey, and told him to go to Frey, address him and ask with whom he was so angry that he would not speak to men. Skirnir said he would go, though not willingly, as unfavourable answers might be expected from him. When he came to Frey he asked why he was so sad and did not speak to men. Frey answered that he had seen a beautiful woman and for her sake he was so full of grief that he would not live long if he should not get her. 'Now thou shalt go and ask her in marriage for me and take her home hither whether her father is willing or not; I will reward it well.' Skirnir answered that he would undertake this message if Frey gave him his sword. This sword was so good that it fought of itself. Frey did not fail to do this and gave it to him. Skirnir then went and asked the woman in marriage for him and got her promise that she would come after nine nights and keep her wedding with Frey. When Skirnir had told Frey of his journey Frey sang:

Long is one night,
Long is another,
How can I endure three?
Often a month to me
Shorter seemed
Than one half of this wedding-night.
(Later Edda, Gylfaginning, 37.)

After the death of Njörd, Frey, one of his sons, succeeded him as high priest of the sacrifices, and, according to tradition, built the great temple at Upsala, which became of great repute as a most holy place among the people of the North, who came

[1] A high seat from which Odin could see over all worlds. (Gylfaginning, 17.) In the older Edda there is a long poem, Skirnismál or Skirnisför, on the story of Njörd falling in love with Gerd.

from all parts of the country to assist at the sacrifices. The Sagas say that great Things were held there, all important quarrels settled, friendship sealed, and peace concluded between chieftains and countries.

"Frey took the realm after Njörd; he was called the dróttin of the Swedes, and took taxes of them. He was as well liked as his father, and in his days also were good seasons. Frey raised a large temple at Uppsalir, and had his head burgh (höfud stad) there; all his taxes, lands, and loose property he gave thereto. That was the beginning of the Uppsalir wealth, which has been kept up ever since.

"In his days the peace of Fródi [1] (King in Denmark) began; then there were good seasons in every land. The Swedes attributed that to Frey. He was worshipped more than other gods, because in his days the people of the land became wealthier than before, on account of the peace and the good seasons. His wife was called Gerd, daughter of Gýmir; [2] their son was Fjölnir. Another name of Frey was Yngvi; this name was long afterwards used among his kin as a name of honour, and his kinsmen were afterwards called Ynglingar. Frey fell sick; when he was near death they took counsel and allowed few men to see him; they made a large mound ready for him with a door and three holes. When Frey was dead they carried him secretly into the mound and told the Swedes that he was alive, and kept him there for three winters. They poured all the taxes into the mound, the gold through one hole, the silver through another, and the brass pennings through the third. Then peace and good seasons continued" (Ynglinga, c. 12).

"When all the Svíar knew that Frey was dead, and peace and good seasons continued, they believed it would last while Frey was in Svithjód, and would not burn him, and called him the god of the world (veraldar god), and sacrificed ever since chiefly to him for good seasons and peace" (Ynglinga, c. 13).

After the death of Frey, Freyja, the daughter of Njörd, became the priestess, and offered the sacrifices.

"Freyja upheld the sacrifices, for she alone of the godar was then living, and she became so renowned that all high-born

[1] The peace of Frodi, so called from the chief who ruled Denmark at the time, and who must have become very celebrated.

[2] Gymir, a jotun of whom nothing is known.

women are called *fruvor*.[1] Thus every woman is the freyja of her property, and she who has a household is hús-freyja[2] (housewife). Freyja was rather many-minded (fickle); her husband was Od; her daughters were Hnoss (costly thing) and Gersemi (precious thing); they were very beautiful, and the costliest things are called by their names" (Ynglinga, c. 13).

According to the Ynglinga, Yngvi Frey was the son of Njörd, and Fjölnir the son of Yngvi Frey. Fjölnir ruled over the Swedish and Upsala domain, and died in Zeeland. A strong friendship existed between him and Fródi the grandson of Skjöld, the son of Odin, and it was the custom of these two chiefs to visit each other.

"Fjölnir the son of Yngvi Frey then ruled over the Swedes and the Upsala-wealth; he was a powerful king, and peace-happy and season-happy. At that time Peace-Fródi was at Hleidra (Leire); they were friends and invited each other. When Fjölnir came to Fródi in Zeeland there was a great feast prepared for him, and people were invited to it from far and wide. Fródi had a large house; in it there had been a large vat, many feet high, held together by large timbers; it stood in the lower story, and there was a loft above in which there was an opening through which the drink could be poured in; the vat was full of mixed mead,[3] a very strong drink. In the evening Fjölnir and his men were shown to their room on the next loft. In the night he went out on the svalir (a kind of balcony) to look for something; he was overcome with sleep and dead-drunk. When he returned to his room he walked along the balcony to the door leading into the next room, and there he missed his footing and fell into the mead-vat and perished" (Ynglinga, c. 14).

Svegdir succeeded his father, Fjölnir, and though several generations had passed away since the death of the last Odin, the veneration towards Asgard, the old home of the earlier Odin, was strong in the heart of the people.

"This Sweden they called Mannheimar (the world of men), but the large Sweden they called Godheimar (the world of gods); from Godheimar many tidings and wonders were told" (Ynglinga, c. 10).

"Svegdir took the realm after his father; he made a vow

[1] A lady is still called *fru* all over Scandinavia.

[2] In Icelandic Sagas house-wife is *hús-freyja*; but in modern Icelandic, *hús-frú*.

[3] *i.e.*, mixed with water.

to search for Godheim and Odin the old. He went with twelve men far and wide about the world; he came to Tyrkland and to Sweden the great, and met there many of his friends and kinsmen, and was five winters on that journey.[1] Then he came back to Sweden, and stayed at home for some time. He had married a woman called Vana in Vanaheim; their son was Vanlandi. Svegdir went again in search of Godheim. In the eastern part of Sweden there is a large bœr called Stein (stone); there stands a rock as large as a big house. One evening after sunset, when Svegdir ceased drinking and went to his sleeping-house, he saw a Dverg sitting outside the rock. Svegdir and his men were very drunk, and ran to the rock. The Dverg stood in the door and shouted to Svegdir to come in if he wanted to meet Odin. Svegdir rushed into the rock, which at once closed upon him, and he came not back" (Ynglinga, c. 15).

A description of the leading events in the life of each of the remaining mythical or semi-mythical rulers named in the genealogies is given in the Ynglinga, but we have only thought it necessary to place before the reader these few typical examples, as the scope of the work will not admit of a fuller treatment of the subject; though some extracts have been incorporated in the Chapter on Customs, &c.

The Northern chiefs traced their ancestry from this Odin of the North, whose influence had become so great with King Gylfi that two of his sons, as we have seen, married the latter's daughters.

When reading the Saga literature we are particularly struck by the frequent references made to pedigrees in which the people of the North took great pride. There are three great genealogical branches through which the Northern chiefs traced their descent from Odin.

"All who are truly wise in events know that the Tyrkjar and Asia-men settled in the northern lands. Then began the tongue which has since spread over all lands. The leader of these people was called Odin, and to him men trace their families"[2] (Sturlaug's Saga (Fornaldarsögur, 111), c. 1).

These genealogical branches are:—1. The *Ynglinga;* or that of Hálfdán the black, the nephew of Rögnvald Jarl. 2. The

[1] This would imply that Sweden was east of Vanaheim.

[2] Cf. also Herraud and Bosi's Saga, c. 1.

Háleygja; or that of Hakon Jarl the great. 3. The *Skjöldunga;* or that of Harald Hilditönn or the Danish branch.

If we could admit that these genealogies are more or less correct, and if we struck an average by generations (of thirty years) the result would make Odin live about the beginning of the Christian era; if a longer average of life is allotted, he would have lived some centuries before that date. But of course the genealogies must be treated as in the main mythical.

The *Ynglingatal*,[1] a genealogical poem,[2] composed for Rögnvald Heidumhœri (the uncle of Harald Fairhair), traces the family of Rögnvald through thirty generations up to Odin, and being probably composed a little after 900, it would make Odin live *about* 100 *before Christ.*

Ari in ch. 12 of Islendingabók traces his family through thirty-seven degrees up to Yngvi Tyrkja King.

These are the names of the forefathers of the Ynglingar and Breidfirdingar (Men of Breidifjord):—

1. Yngvi Tyrkjaking.
2. Njörd Sviaking.
3. Frey.
4. Fjölnir, who died at Frid-Frödi's.
5. Svegdir.
6. Vanlandi.
7. Vísbur.
8. Dómaldi.
9. Dómar.
10. Dyggvi.
11. Dag.
12. Alrek.
13. Agni.
14. Yngvi.
15. Jörund.
16. Aun the old.
17. Egil Vendikráka.
18. Ottar.
19. Adils at Uppsalir.
20. Eystein.
21. Yngvar.
22. Braut-önund.
23. Injgald the evil.
24. Ólaf, wood-chopper (tretelgja).
25. Hálfdán Whiteleg Upplendinga-king.
26. Godrod.
27. Ólaf.
28. Helgi.
29. Ingjald, the son of the daughter of Sigurd, son of Ragnar Lodbrok.
30. Oleif the white (king in Dublin).
31. Thorstein the red.
32. Glei Feilan, the first of them who settled in Iceland.
33. Thórd gellir.
34. Eyjólf, who was baptized in his old age when Christianity came to Iceland.
35. Thorkel.
36. Gellir, the father of Thorkel and Brand and Thorgils, Ari's father.

As another example of these genealogies we give that of

[1] Cf. also Ynglinga Saga, and *Prologue to Heimskringla.*

[2] The *Ynglingatal* is not given, as it is tedious, and would be uninteresting to the general reader.

THE SKJOLDUNGA BRANCH.

Odin Asa-king.
Skjöld.
Fridleif.
Fridfródi.
Fridleif.
Hávar the Hand-strong.

Fródi.
Vermund the Wise.
Ólaf the Humble.
Dan the Proud.
Fródi the Peaceful.

Fridleif.
Fródi the Valiant.[1]

Ingjald.
Hrœrek Ringniggard.
Fródi.
Hálfdán.
Hrœrek Ring-thrower.
Harald Hilditönn.

Hálfdán.
Helgi.
Hrolf Kraki.
Hróar.
Valdar the mild.
Harald the old.
Hálfdán the Valiant.
Ivar Vidfadmi.
Aud the Deep-minded = married, 1. Hrœrek Ring-thrower. 2. Randbard.

Randver.
Sigurd Hring.
Ragnar Lodbrok.
Sigurd Snake-eye.

Aslaug.
Sigurd Hart.
Ragnhild.
Harald Fairhair (A.D. 872–933).

The following passage from the 'Later Edda,' which refers to this branch, may help the curious to fix the dates of these chiefs. According to it Odin the hero lived some years before the beginning of the Christian era.

"Skjöld (Shield) was the son of Odin, from whom the Skjöldungar are descended. He dwelt in and ruled over the lands now called Danmörk, which were then called Gotland. Skjöld had a son, Fridleif, who ruled the lands after him.

Fridleif's son Fródi got the kingship after his father, about the time when the Emperor Augustus made peace all over the world; then Christ was born. As Fródi was the most powerful of all kings in the Northern lands, all who spoke the Danish (Dansk) tongue[2] attributed the peace to him, and the Northmen called it the Peace of Fródi. No man did harm to another, even if he met the slayer of his father or his brother bound or loose; no thieves or robbers were then found, so that a gold ring lay for a long time in Jalangr-heath (*i.e.*, was not taken by any one)" ('Later Edda.' Skáld-skaparmal, c. 43).

[1] Fródi had two sons, Ingjald and Hálfdán. From the first was descended the great Harald Hilditönn, who was defeated by his kinsman Sigurd Hring at the Bravalla-battle. From the second was descended Harald Fairhair, the ancestor of the Dukes of Normandy, and so indirectly of Queen Victoria.

[2] This was written after all the petty kingdoms of Denmark had been consolidated into one; the term Danish tongue at earlier periods did not exist, but *Norrœna*, or Northern tongue, was used instead.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STONE AGE.

Prehistoric ages of man—Use of metal unknown—First traces of man—Weapons of flint, bone, &c.—Graves of the Stone Age—Introduction of domestic animals—The cromlech or dolmen always near the sea—Gallery or passage graves—The passage grave of Karleby—Stone coffin graves—Sepulchral chambers—Objects of the Stone Age.

WE have now given accounts of the literature which contains the earliest records of the people of the North. Let us pause and study for a while its archæology, which will throw considerable light also on its inhabitants and their customs.

It is now generally recognised by archæologists that all people who have advanced to a certain degree of civilisation have passed through three periods of development, which according to the material of which their implements, weapons, and utensils were made, have been named the *stone*, the *bronze*, and the *iron* age. We have very abundant evidence that the people of the North passed through these three stages, and indeed had reached the iron age before they came within the ken of history. Beginning with the stone age, let us see what we can learn of the civilisation of the North from the various articles which were in use during the three stages.

The finds in the North have been classified under the name "*grave*," "*bog*," and "*earth*" *finds*; that is, objects found in graves, bogs, or in the ground. In the latter case they are often hidden under stones, in obedience to the injunctions of Odin. Those of the iron age are found as far as 69° North latitude.

The custom of burying different objects with the dead, and also that of throwing objects and weapons into springs or bogs, or of hiding them in the ground, has helped in a most remarkable manner to give us an idea of the industries and daily life of the people there at a remote period.

In the earliest age the use of metal was unknown, the weapons were made of stone, horn, and bone,[1] and towards the close of this age pottery was made.

The first traces of man in some parts of the present Scandinavia are the *kjökkenmöddinger* (kitchen refuse heaps), consisting of oyster and mussel shells, bones of fish, birds, and mammals, such as the deer, bear, boar, beaver, seal, ure-ox, wolf, fox, &c., &c., with remains of clay vessels. Among and near these heaps of refuse are found a great number of rude implements and weapons made of flint, bone, horn, and broken flint chips, also fireplaces made of a few stones roughly put together, thus showing that the inhabitants lived in a very primitive state.

No graves of the earliest period of the stone age have thus far been found in the North. Towards the latter part of this age we see a great improvement in the making of weapons and tools; the latter were beautifully polished, and graceful in form. Domestic animals had also been introduced, as shown by the bones of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, and dogs, that have been found in the graves. Beads of amber and bone were worn as ornaments. The graves of the stone age discovered in the present Scandinavia and on the islands and shores of the Baltic may be classified in four groups: the *cromlech* or *dolmen;* the *passage* or *gallery graves;* the *free-standing stone coffins;* and the *stone coffins covered by a mound.*[2]

The cromlechs consist of from three to five large stones standing upright, and so placed as to form a ring, with a large block or boulder on the top. These were intended for a single body, buried in a sitting position, with flint implements and weapons. The walls of the chamber were made by large stones, smooth inside, and the floor consisted of sand or gravel. Certain marks on the tops of stones seem to indicate that

[1] Antiquities of the stone age have been found in bogs at Hœbelstrup; Sandbjerg, near Hörsholm; Læsten, near Randers; Kjær, Ringkjöbing Amt, Jutland; Samsö, &c.; and in mounds. Among them are numerous amber beads; flint tools from 4½ to 10 ins. long, many having teeth like a saw; axe-blades, chisels, spear-points, and ornaments.

[2] The following contents of a *Dolmen* at Luthra, Vestergotland, are typical:—5 spear-heads, 1 arrow-head, 19 rough flint axes, 4 bone pins, 18 bone beads, 4 amber beads, 11 pierced teeth of bears, dogs, and pigs, several bones of cows, and a great number of skeletons.

sacrifices to the dead were prevalent; holes about
width are found on the roofs of some cromlechs
graves. These cromlechs always occur near the

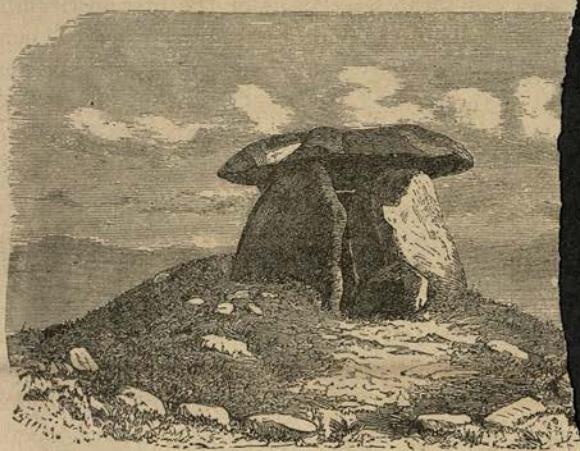


Fig. 2.—Cromlech near Haga, Bohuslän.

more than seven miles from the coast. The other gr
the stone age are often found far inland, but they are
always near a lake or river having connection with the

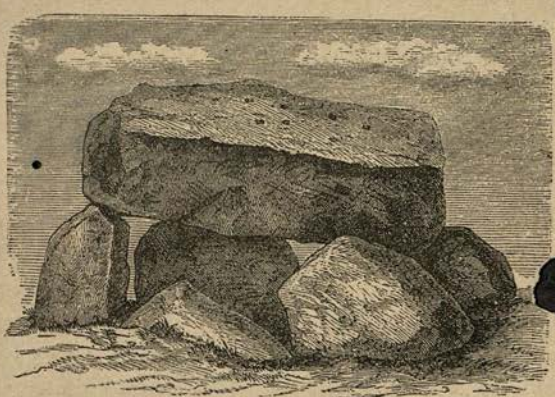


Fig. 3.—Cromlech (stendös) with concave recesses on the roof-stone, near Fasmorup, in Skåne.

The cromlechs which appear to be the latest graves of this age have a much wider distribution than the other forms; they are found in nearly all the provinces where the older

ves occur. Most of them were in or on the top of
ich almost always had the roof, and in most cases

hree oblong cromlechs, distance between each about 120 feet, length
width 20 feet, position north and south, Lille Rorbœk, Zeeland. The
ad two stone-built chambers, both with the entrance from the east.
n burial chamber is now destroyed, while the northern is completely
It is 5½ feet long, and 3 feet wide, and has four walls of stone, three
pport a stone roof.

wall, uncovered. The mound, which is generally
metimes oblong, is surrounded at its base by stones

Fig. 5.—Sepulchral chamber covered with a mound, Kallundborg, Zeeland; height about 16 feet. In levelling the mound the earth was found to contain articles which tend to show the existence of a "kjökkenmödding."

often very large; when this was oblong, the grave was nearer the one end than the other.

Gallery or passage graves consisted of a chamber and a

Fig. 6.—Passage grave on Axvalla heath, near Lake Venern, Vestergötland, Sweden, situated on a hill overlooking a flat country. Numerous graves belonging to that period are found in the neighhourhood.

The walls are made by large slabs, those in the passage being lower than the slabs of the quadrangle. The roof is of flat slabs of granite, 5 to 6 feet above the floor, a similar one serving as a door, closing the outer end of the passage, which is 20 feet long, and 2½ to 3 feet broad, and 3 feet high. The mortuary itself (the quadrangle) is 32 feet long by 9 feet broad.

The dead sit along the walls, young and old, men and women, the chin resting in both hands, with their legs drawn up. Thin slabs form the cells round each skeleton, and are about 3 feet high, consequently do not reach the roof. Arrow points, knives, etc., of flintstone, are found with the men, pieces of amber with the women.

Numbers of similar graves are found in Sweden and Denmark, a single grave sometimes containing nearly one hundred bodies.

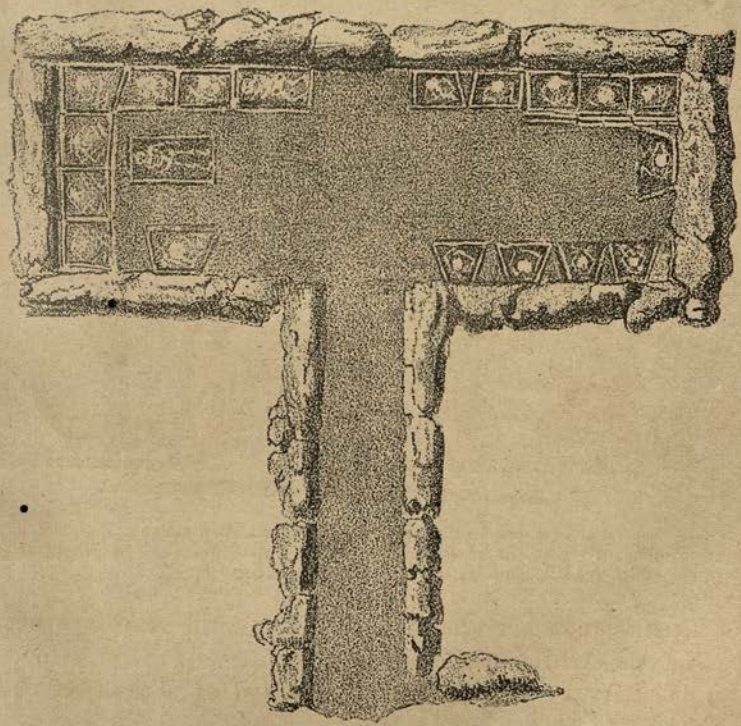


Fig. 7.—Plan of above grave.

narrow gallery leading into it, the whole being covered by a mound, the base of which was generally surrounded by a circle of larger or smaller stones.

The chamber in a passage grave is either oblong, square, oval, or nearly round; the walls are formed by large upright blocks, not quite smooth, though even on the inside; the interstices are generally carefully filled up with gravel or fragments of stone, and birch bark is sometimes found between the blocks. The roof was formed by immense flat slabs or blocks, smooth on the under side, but rough on the top, the

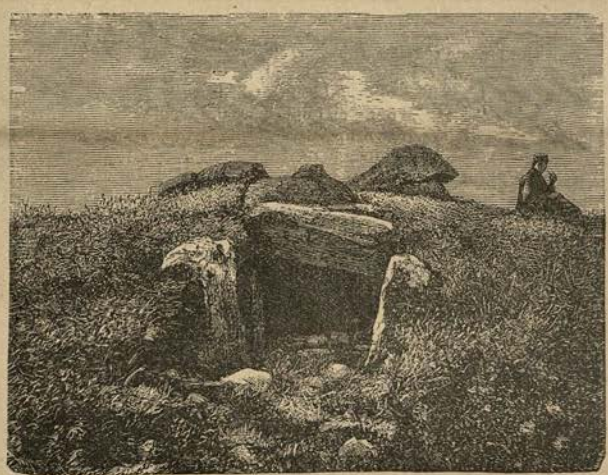


Fig. 8.—Passage grave near Karleby—front view; length of the main gallery covered by nine large stones, 52 feet; width, 7 feet; length of passage, 40 feet; height, 6 feet.

interstices being closed in the same manner as those in the walls. The floor is sometimes covered with small flat stones, but usually with earth. On the long side of the chamber there is an opening, from which a passage was built in the same manner as the chamber, only longer and narrower. This passage, or more precisely its inner part, was covered with blocks resembling the roof blocks of the chamber, but smaller; near the inner opening of the passage, and the outer end of its covered part a kind of door setting has been often found, consisting of a stone threshold and two narrow door-posts.

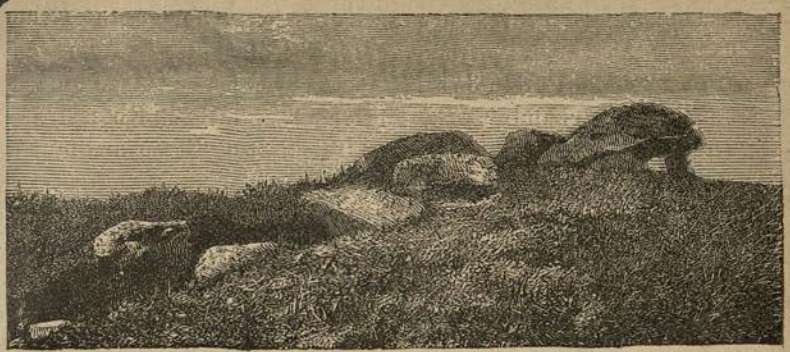


Fig. 9.—Side view of passage grave near Karleby.

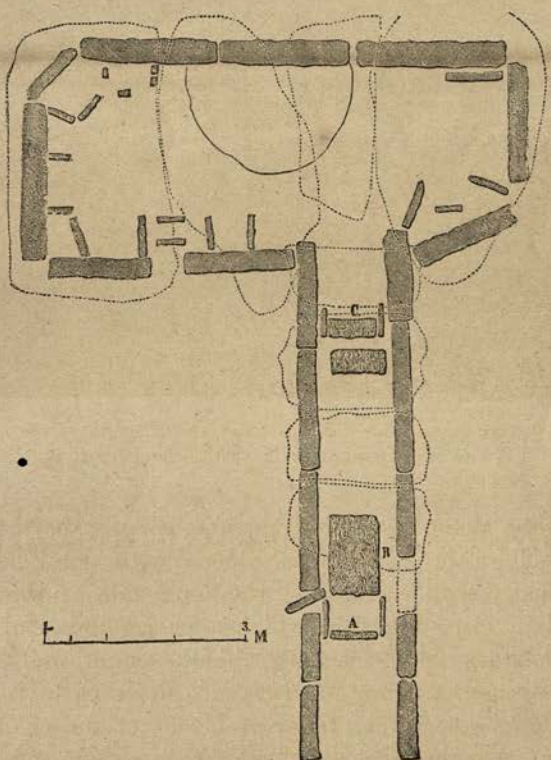


Fig. 10.—Ground-plan of passage grave near Karleby.
The irregular lines show the position of the slabs covering the grave.

The passage graves vary much in size. The length of the chamber is generally from 11½ to 23 feet, its width from 5 to 10 feet; height from 3½ to 4½ feet. The passage is often as long as the chamber, or even longer, and its width is from 2 to 4 feet, and height from 3 to 5 feet. But some are much larger, and are called giants' graves. One of the largest of these graves is that of Karleby, near Falköping, Vestergötland, in Sweden, where a great number of the graves of the stone age have been found.

Fig. 11.—Stone coffin (hällkista) near Skattened, in Södra Ryrs parish, Vestergötland, 21¼ feet in length. Graves of this type are very numerous in Bohuslan also, and in Dal and south-western Vermland.

This grave[1] was found under a large but not very deep mound, and is divided into a large chamber and two smaller ones, separated by stone slabs.

In it were remains of sixty skeletons, and by their side a large number of poniards, spear-points, arrow-heads, and other objects of flint and stone, showing that the grave belonged to

[1] Of the 140 passage graves at present known in Sweden, more than 110 have been found in Skaraborglan, and most of these near Falköping.

Mound, Broholm. Sepulchral chamber made [illegible] short passage leading to it. Stones from 4 feet 15 inches to 4 feet high, [illegible] 2½ to 4 feet wide; inside of the chamber 9 feet wide. Only four stones remain of the passage leading to the chamber, which is about 2 feet wide, and turns south-west. The space between the

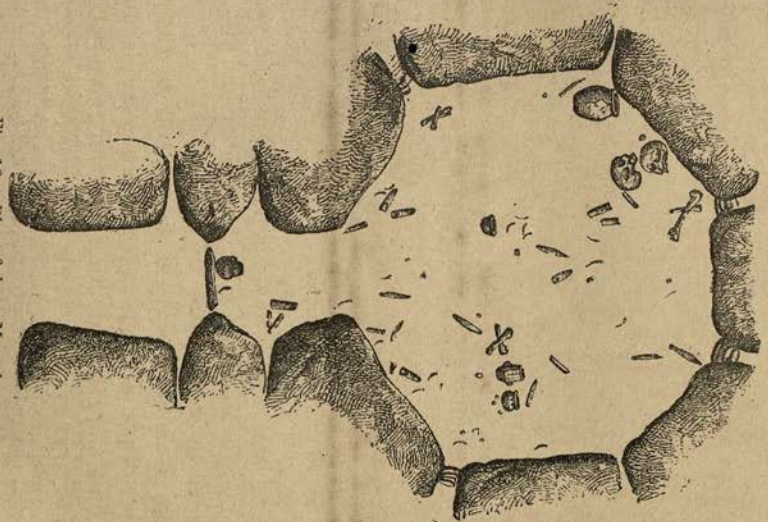


Fig. 13.—Plan of above Mound.

boulders is filled with small stones. In the chamber were charcoal and different things. To the left of the entrance lay remains of two skulls close to each other; and spread in every direction were daggers, blades, and points of spears, points of arrows, numerous amber beads, a necklace of amber, four clay vessels, and fragments of others, &c.

Fig. 12.

the period when stone implements were still in use; b
among the skeletons in the lower part of the grave a couple of
bronze beads and a bronze spear-point were found.

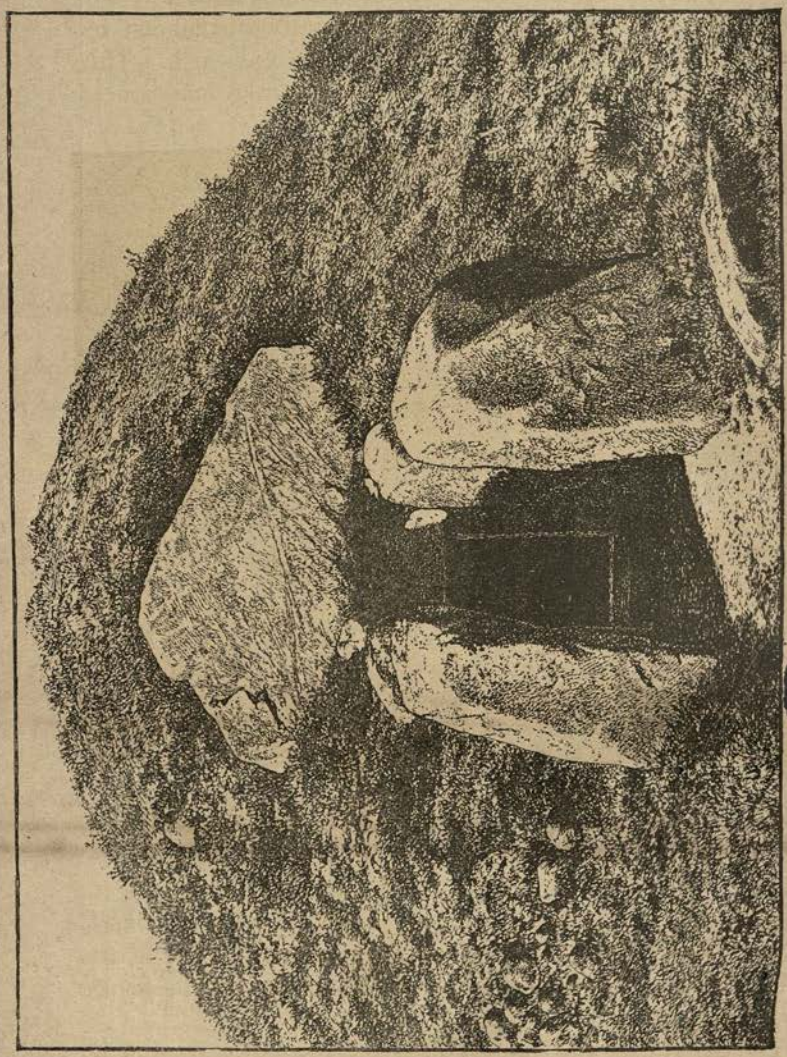


Fig. 14.—Entrance t
chamber is 13½
5½ feet high. Th
mark. Diameter 100 feet, height 14 feet. The length of the
nce towards the south passage is 18 feet long, 2½ feet wide, and
n bones and several flint implements and three small clay urns.

The isolated stone coffins were formed of flat upright stones, and were four-sided, though the two longer sides were not parallel, thus making the coffin narrower at one end than at

other. Most of them were probably covered with one or more stones; and although these have in many places long ago been destroyed or removed, they are sometimes still found in their place. The direction of these coffins is almost always from north to south, and they are generally surrounded by a mound of stones of more or less stone-mixed earth. This form of grave was probably the outcome of the omission of

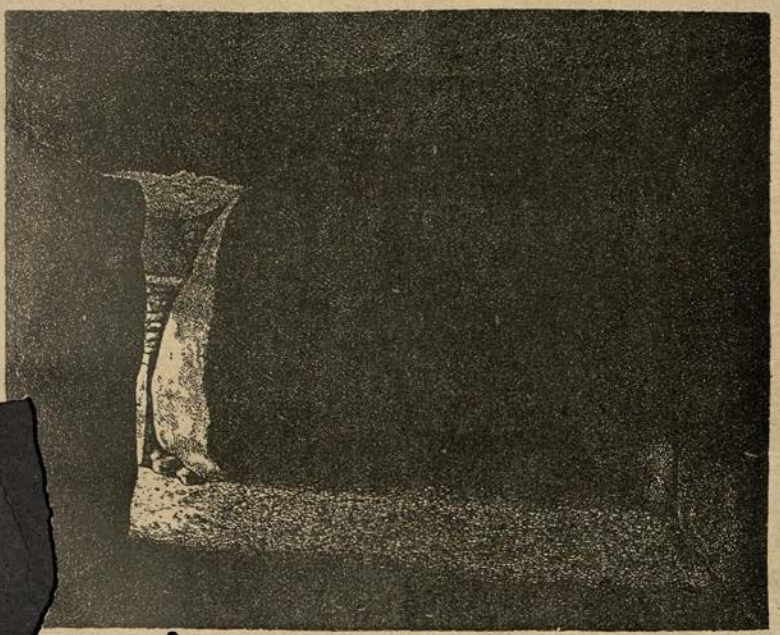


Fig. 15.—Interior of the passage grave at Uby. The spaces between the large stones filled with pebbles. The roof is formed by two large stones which have been cut from a large block.

the passage. Several intermediate forms have been found, showing how the passage was gradually lessened until it can only be traced in the opening which narrows at the south end of the coffin.

The length of the stone coffin was generally from 8 to 13½ feet, width from 3 to 5 feet, height from 2½ to 5 feet. A few, especially in Vestergötland, are from 19½ to 31 feet in length, one of the longest graves of this kind in Sweden being

one on Stora Lundskulla, in Vestergötland, with a length of 34 feet, and width of 8 feet. Nearly all other stone coffins found are, like the gallery graves, without a stone at the southern end. This cannot be accidental.

Besides the stone coffin above described, several have been

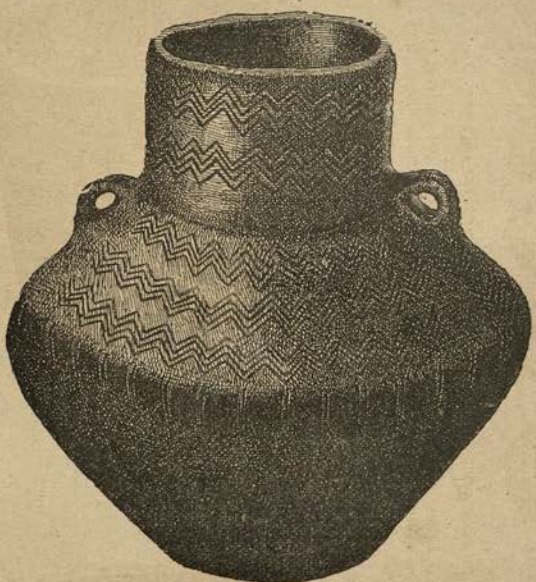


Fig. 16.—Clay urn—Stone age—$\frac{1}{3}$ real size. In passage grave, Stege, island of Möen, Baltic, found with remains of some skeletons. Two stone axes, a flint saw, 2 arrow-points, 3 spear-heads, fragments of clay vessels with covers, pieces of a wooden tub, 2 awls of bone, a chisel of bone, 3 flint wedges, 2 flat scrapers of flint, and 17 amber beads for necklace were also found in the grave. The same mound was afterwards used for burials belonging to the bronze age, with cinerary urns with burned bones, on the top of which was a double-edged bronze knife, &c.

found covered with a mound. The chambers are generally formed of upright flat stones, and roofed also with stones. They are generally smaller than the stone coffins, being from 6 to 10 feet long, and closed on all four sides; sometimes, however, there is found in the southern end an opening as previously mentioned.

POTTERY.

Fig. 17.—Amber-beads forming a necklace found in the grave with the clay urn.

The same mound was afterwards used for burial belonging to the bronze age; near the top, and entirely separate from the burial-chambers, there was discovered a very small stone coffin containing an urn with burnt bones, and on these lay a fine double-edged knife, a knife, and a pair of pincers, all of bronze.

Fig. 18.—Clay vessel found near Fredericia, Jutland. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 19.—Clay urn, Stone age grave, with flint weapons and amber-heads. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Island of Möen.

Fig. 20.—Necklace of amber beads found with other amber beads and ornaments, altogether about 2,500, in a bog at the hamlet of Losten, Viborg amt, Jutland. ¼ real size.

Fig. 22.—Stone axes, of the form of some bronze axes. Several specimens in the Copenhagen Museum. ⅓ real size.—Fyen.

The two axes in this page are given on account of their peculiar form, simila to that of the bronze age. Many other forms of weapons will be fou illustrated in 'The Land of the Midnight Sun.'

Fig. 23.—Clay vessel found in a burial chamber with flint implements and other objects near Aalborg, Denmark. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 24.—Clay vessel found in a large passage grave, with flint, and other implements, near Haderslev, Slesvig. ⅓ real size.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRONZE AGE.

Abundance of gold—Stone occasionally used for arrow-heads—Pottery—Graves—Commencement of cremation—Objects of this period—Proficiency in the art of casting—Weapons—Ornaments more varied than in the stone age—The Kivik grave—Oak coffins—Clothing of the bronze age—Sewing implements—Burnt and unburnt bodies sometimes found in the same grave—Gold vessels and ornaments—Bronze vessels—Battle-horns—Bronze knives.

WHILE the three ages to some extent overlap, while we find stone articles running into the bronze age, and bronze and even stone into the iron age, still the distinction between the three periods is too clearly marked to be overlooked. Thus in the bronze age, characterised by the use of that metal and of gold, the weapons were almost entirely of bronze; amber still continued to be used for ornaments, and towards the close of this epoch glass, in the shape of beads, and iron appeared, but silver seems to have been unknown. Sometimes stone continued to be used for arrow-heads and spear-points.

The pottery shows a distinct improvement on that of the stone-age.

The graves of the bronze age, as in the preceding stone age, are covered by a mound of earth, or a cairn, and contain several burial places. During the latter part of the bronze age the custom of burning the dead was introduced, but in the earlier part the bodies were unburnt. When the custom of cremation commenced and how long it lasted it is utterly impossible to tell, but from the numerous finds it is evident that it must have been in use long before iron became known. The graves of this period also generally lie on the top of some high hill, or the cairns are placed on the summit of some promontory having an unobstructed view of the sea or some large sheet of water. These graves

prove that the shores of the Baltic and of the Cattegat were once thickly inhabited by a people having the same customs and religion; and from the situations of the graves, as well as from the objects, etc., in them, we learn that they were a seafaring people. North of the great lakes on the large Scandinavian peninsula these antiquities become more rare, thus showing that country not to have been so thickly settled.

From the finds of beautiful and often costly antiquities belonging to the bronze age,[1] and from their great numbers, the fact is brought vividly to our mind, that even before iron was discovered there existed in those regions a remarkable culture.

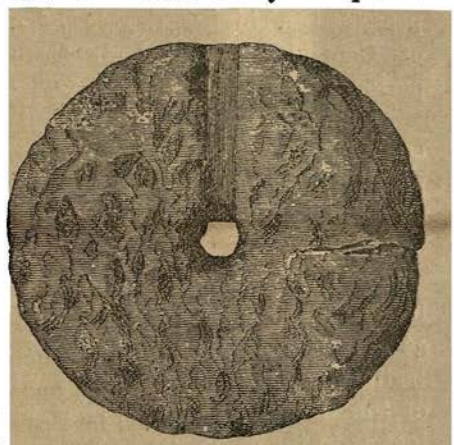


Fig. 25.—Cake of a rosin-like substance made of a paste of birch bark, and containing fragments of amber, used as a kind of putty to fill up the hollows of objects of bronze, &c., found in bogs and urns belonging to the bronze age.

The people had attained very great proficiency in the art of casting, most of the objects are cast, and some of the weapons have still the mark of the clay upon them; the model was sometimes made of wax and clay put round it, the bronze was cast into the mould thus made, and the wax melted into the mould which afterwards was broken in order to take out the sword or object manufactured. Some of the small daggers especially are marvels of casting, which could not be surpassed to-day. The largest swords are cast in one piece. In the collection at Copenhagen nine of these are perfect, the size of the longest being from 35 to 38 inches. The swords, daggers, poniards often have their hilts ornamented or twisted with threads of gold.

The weapons of the bronze epoch are the same as those of

[1] Some of the forms of these antiquities are met with in parts of Germany, Hungary, England, and elsewhere in Europe, whilst others, by far the most numerous, are peculiarly Northern.

the stone age; poniards, axes, spears, bows and arrows. The sword and the shield seem to have been in common use; one of these now in Copenhagen was found covered with thin gold.

The simple ornaments of the stone age are replaced by more varied and beautiful ones. Gold jewels and vases become common and testify to the wealth of the people. In this age as in the preceding age of stone, the people of the North attained a greater degree of proficiency, and seem to have possessed a higher degree of civilisation than the people of Central and Northern Europe belonging to the same period.

The graves containing unburnt bones which belong to the early period of the bronze age are very similar to those of the preceding period of the stone age, they contain several skeletons, then finally decrease in size until they become about 7 feet long, or just large enough to contain one body.

The bodies were often not buried in stone chambers but in coffins made of the trunks of oak trees. It may be that at a later period the customs of burning bodies and burying bodies unburnt co-existed, as will be seen in the account of the iron age. The warrior was buried with his weapons just as in the stone age.

One of the most interesting graves which I have seen, belonging, probably, to the bronze age, is the Kivik cairn (see p. 88), near the sea on a beautiful bay near the town of Cimbrisham. This monument is the only one of its kind known in the North. It shows perfect resemblance to others of the bronze age, and differs only from the cairns found on the hill-tops of Bohuslän in its larger size. We have looked with great care at the tracings, which are not so deep as those of the rock-tracings situated in the neighbourhood. The signs carved on the stones are evidently symbolical, and were so made as to look upon the great chief that had been buried there.

The Kivik grave, like many others belonging to the bronze age situated by the sea, is about 700 feet in circumference. The coffin, of flat upright slabs, was discovered in 1750; its length is fourteen feet; width, three feet. It is formed by

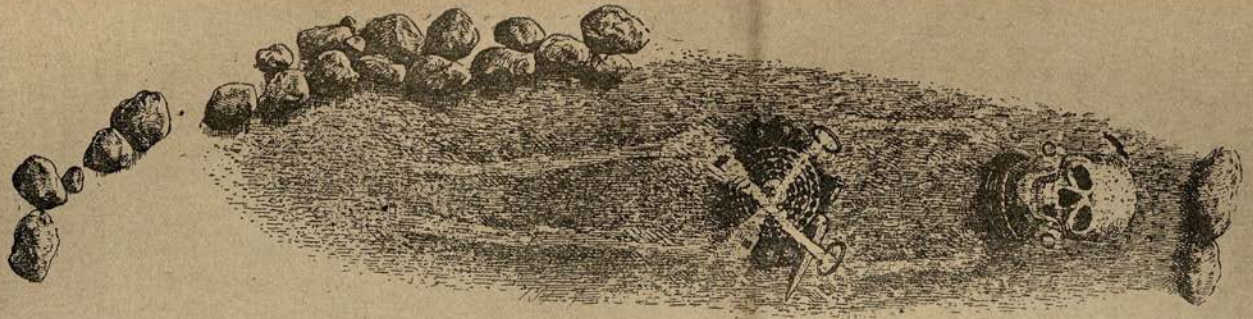


Fig. 26.—Skeleton in a grave, about 8 feet 5 inches long, lying south-west and north-east. The mound, which was about 4 feet high, with a diameter of 50 feet, contained in the centre another grave. Hesselagergaard, Broholm, Fyen. The original position of the head of the warrior was 19 inches from the line of stones. The warrior was buried with his weapons just as in the stone age. The following were some of the objects found in the grave: Fragments of a bronze fibula, a little above the head to the right. Two bronze rings on each side of the head, 6 inches from it. A bronze necklet; 13 inches below the lower edge of the necklet was a large, flat, bronze, titulus (sort of shield boss) ornamented with three rows of spirals. Above the edge of the large titulus was a bronze dagger, in a scabbard 8½ inches long.

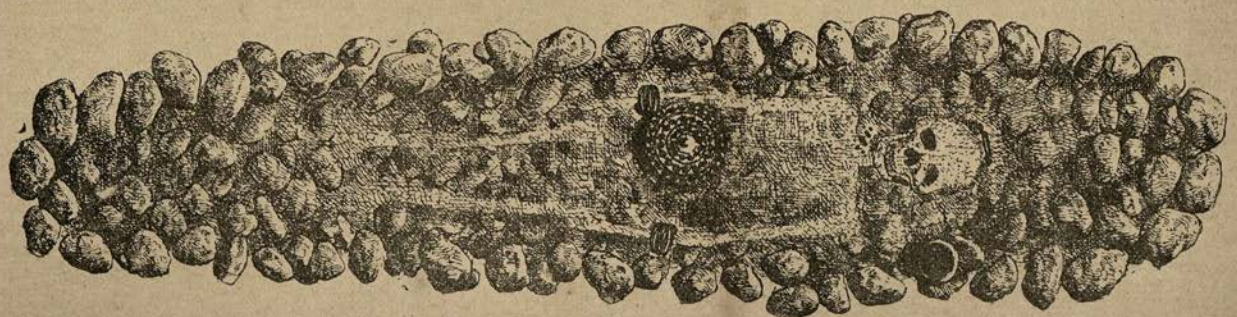


Fig. 27.—Man buried with ornaments. Grave, 9 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches wide, in a mound, Hesselagergaard. Among the ornaments were some spiral bracelets and finger rings, amber beads and one light blue glass bead.

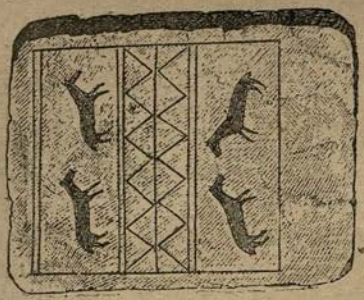


Fig. 31.

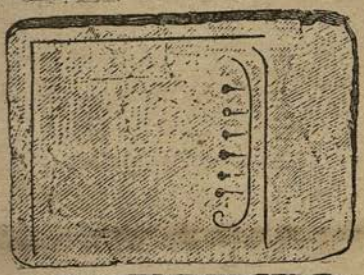


Fig. 30.

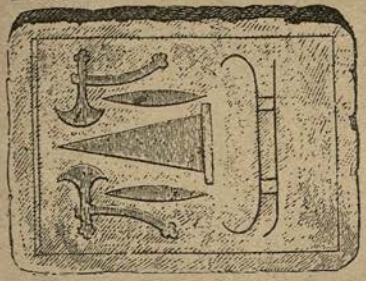


Fig. 29.

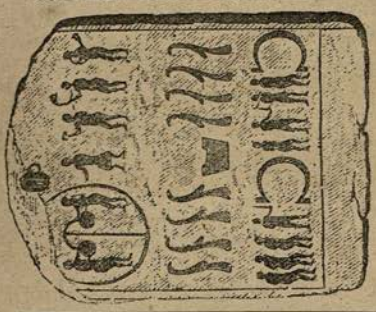


Fig. 28.

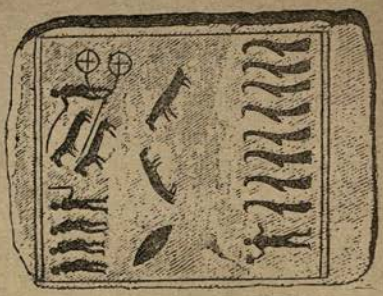


Fig. 35.

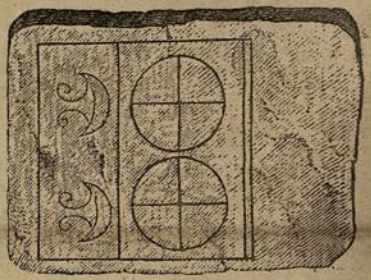


Fig. 34.

Fig. 33.

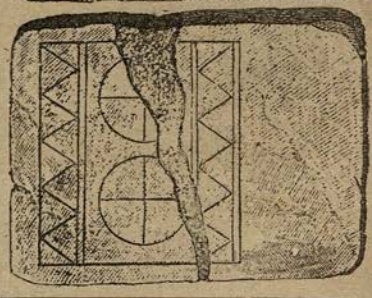


Fig. 32.

Slab, from the Kivik grave.[1]

[1] In one of the slabs (Fig. 28) there seems to be a representation of a kind of sacrificing altar, with figures of persons coming towards it, as if they were coming there for some object. There seem to be men blowing horns. In Fig. 29 are a ship and a large cone, on each side of which are an axe and another object or sign the significance of which is unknown.

Fig. 30 has only a ship.

Fig. 31 has four-footed animals, the lower ones coming in opposite directions, and the others going the same way; but the two subjects are separated by peculiar marks.

four slabs on each side, and one at the north end. These were nearly four feet high, three feet wide, and eight to nine inches thick, and placed side by side. The inner surfaces were more or less smooth, though neither cut nor polished, and on these were the tracings. Two of these stones were lost about seventy

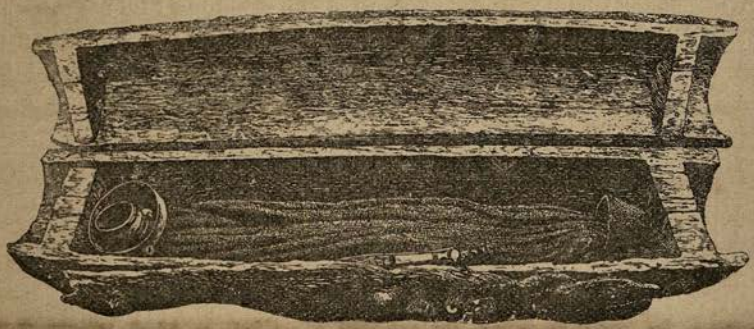


Fig. 36.—Oak coffin. Kongshöi find (Jutland).

years ago. The grave was covered with three slabs, and pointed north and south.

In a mound at Havdrup in Ribe amt, Jutland, there were found in 1861 three well-preserved oak coffins. The contents of two had been taken out before the discovery was notified

Fig. 37.—Oak coffin, with skeleton body covered with a woollen cloak, Treenhöi, Jutland; one half serving as bed.

to the authorities, but the third was found in the state shown in the illustration. Near this mound was that of Kongshöi, containing four well-preserved oaken coffins. The contents of these were however not as well preserved as those in the coffins of Treenhöi. At the top of this mound there were discovered clay urns with burnt bones.

In some of these oaken coffins are found wooden bowls with handles, and ornamented with inserted pins of tin.

The articles of dress, found in a most extraordinary state of preservation in the oak coffin, kept from decay no doubt by the tannin in the oak, show how the people of the North dressed well before iron had come into use among them. These are the earliest perfect garments known, and even the latest

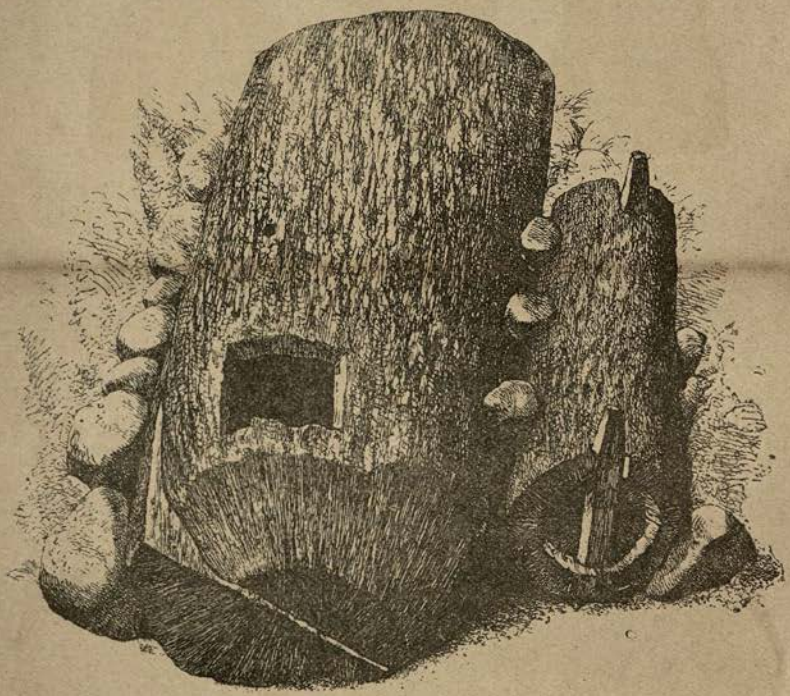


Fig. 38.—Oak coffin, Treenhöi, Jutland; one half serving as bed.

period to which they belong cannot be far from three thousand years ago, and they may be of a much earlier date.

Among the most interesting graves which have given remarkable results in regard to dress are the mounds of Treenhöi by Vandrup, near Kolding, in Jutland.

In a man's grave was a small cap covering the head of the body, which was wrapped in a deer-skin, composed of several sewn pieces of woven material, and ornamented outside with woollen threads, which had been inserted, and terminating with knots.

On the left side under the cloak lay a bronze sword in a wooden sheath, of lath lined with deer-skin, the hair being inside. The hilt was ornamented by an oval bronze button at

Fig. 39.—Cap.

Fig. 40.—Woollen shawl.

Fig. 41.—Cap.

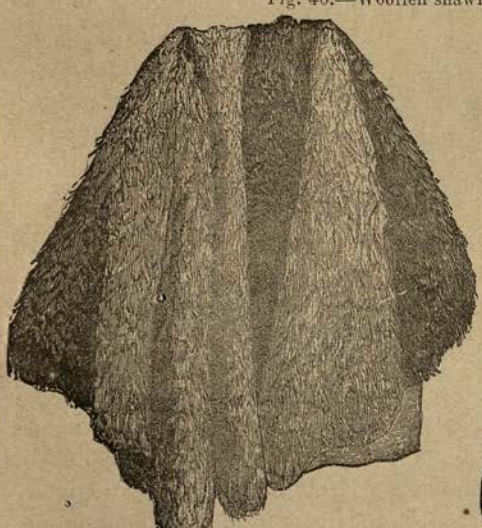


Fig. 42.—Coarse woollen cloak.

Fig. 43.—Woollen skirt held by a striped band.

Articles of clothing, Treenhöi, Jutland.

its top. There were no traces of leggings or other protection for the legs, but the feet seem to have been protected by strips of wool, and to have had leather shoes or sandals on.

The graves of women contain daggers, which may possibly imply that the women had been warriors; also large spiral rings, various ornaments, finger-rings, bracelets, glass beads, &c.

Fig. 44.—Woman's skirt and bodice of wool, found with bronze ornaments, and a bronze poniard with horn handle by the side of the body which had been wrapped in a deer-skin.—Aarhus, North Jutland.

Women's dress of the bronze age seems to have consisted of the skirt and bodice as at the present time, but the men's clothes were quite different from those of the iron age; in the earlier time trousers were not worn, while we see them in use in the latter.

Many sewing implements of bronze have been found in the graves, the needles like those of the stone age are sometimes made of bone, but many are of bronze; awls were used to pierce the holes in garments that were made of skins, and some peculiar-shaped knives have been found which were probably used in the making of skin clothing, or in cutting leather.

In a grave-mound near Aarhus, in North Jutland, a coffin made of two oak logs was found. The bottom of the coffin was covered with an untanned ox or deer-hide. On this lay a large cloak, made of coarse wool and cattle-hair. In the cloak, which was partly destroyed, was wrapped the skeleton of a

woman dressed. The hair was long and dark, and a net covered the head, tied under the chin.

Burnt and unburnt bodies are sometimes found in the same

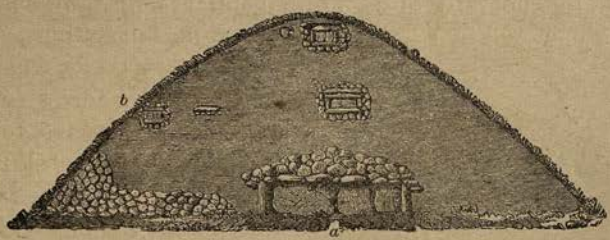


Fig. 45.—Profile of mound of the bronze age, with large coffin and unburnt body, and stone cist with cinerary urn containing burnt bones, also three smaller stone cists filled with burnt bones. Dömmerstorf, S. Halland.

Fig. 46.—Mound and sepulchral cist. The stones in this grave were of size of the fist, and formed a pavement of a diameter of about a yard. The urn contained burnt bones, among which were found a bronze awl, and fragments of a bronze saw.

mound; the latter generally at the bottom of the graves, the former at the top, this shows that the graves with unburnt

Fig. 47.—Mound at Elsehoved, Fyen. At the bottom, in the centre of the mound, was found an irregular grave filled with earth, of about 4 feet 9 inches in length, 1 foot 9 inches in width, 1 foot 10 inches in depth (measured inside). Outside, on the natural soil, was spread a bed of earth, rich in charcoal, which contained remains of burnt bones and pieces of a clay urn, &c.

bodies are considerably the older of the two. A mound with several graves may possibly have been the burial place of one family. The graves of the later bronze age are more

numerous on the shores of the Baltic than in other parts of Europe. Sometimes the burnt remains have been found wrapped in clothing, and placed in an ordinary-sized coffin, but more generally these burnt bones are preserved in urns of clay enclosed in a small stone cist.

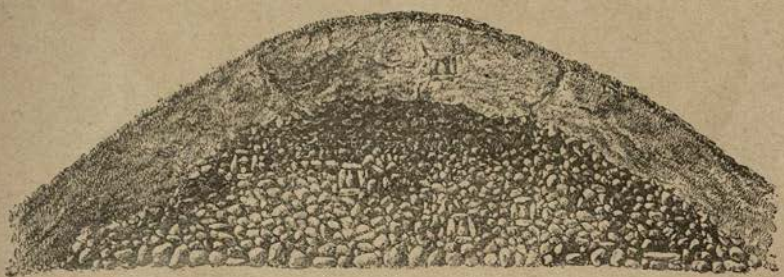


Fig. 48.—Cairn covered with earth, bronze age, Kongstrup, Zealand. Diameter nearly 40 feet; height, 10 feet; covered with about 3 feet of clay, containing over thirty urns, one of which was fastened with a resin-like substance; with burnt bones and cinders, protected by little sepulchral cists made of slabs.

These stone cists of about the length of an average man are interesting as indicating the transition to the small ones containing burnt bones; some of these of a size large enough for an unburnt body have contained only a small heap of burnt bones, and evidently belonged to the period when the cremation of the dead began to prevail. Many of these little

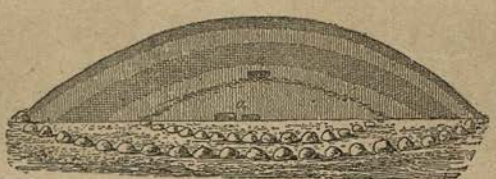


Fig. 49.—Mound of the bronze age, covering a double ring of stones; diameter of outside ring 86 feet; containing several burial-places, with urns and burnt bones.—Near Kallundborg, Zealand.

cists are only large enough to enclose a clay pot, in which the bones were collected; sometimes no coffins were found, but only clay pots containing ashes, a small bronze knife, a bit of bronze saw, or something of that kind. In some cases the bones were put simply into a hole in the mound and the whole covered with a stone slab.

Fig. 50.—Clay vase; $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Found in stone cist in the mound with an urn containing burnt bones, among which lay two bronze knives.—Mound at Gjöttrup, near Lögstör, Denmark.

Fig. 51.—Pot of burned clay; $\frac{1}{4}$ real size. Found in a mound with urns and bronze objects.—Vidstrup, Hjörring amt, Denmark.

Fig. 52.—Cinerary urn, $\frac{1}{6}$ real size. Burnt bones.—Holstein.

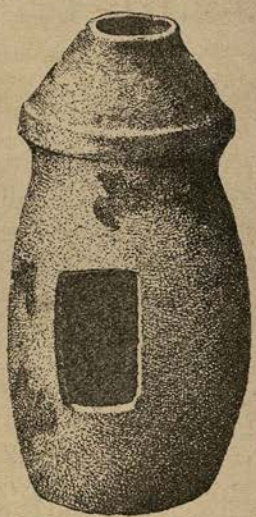


Fig. 53.—Cinerary urn, $\frac{1}{6}$ real size. With burnt bones.—Jutland.

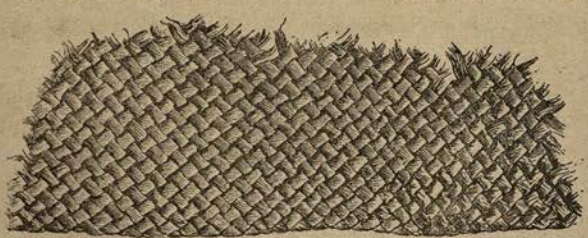


Fig. 54.—Fragment of woollen cloth. Real size. Found at the bottom of a mound at Dömmestorp, in Halland; in a fold of it lay a well-preserved bronze poniard with its leather scabbard. The shawl was 5 feet long and 20 inches wide.

Fig. 55.—Maglehöj mound; height about 14 feet, diameter 40 to 50 feet; with sepulchral chamber, height, 5 feet; width, 5½ feet; length, 7 feet. Inside the chamber the ground was laid with cobble-stones; on top of these flint-stones, 2 to 3 inches in thickness; and then again a layer of cobble-stones, and among these were found: a diadem of bronze, two pieces of shields or breast-armour, the blade of a dagger, &c., &c.—Zeeland.

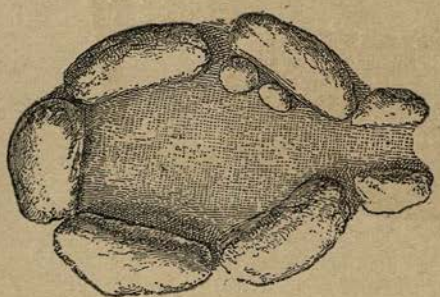


Fig. 56.—Floor of chamber.—Maglehöj.

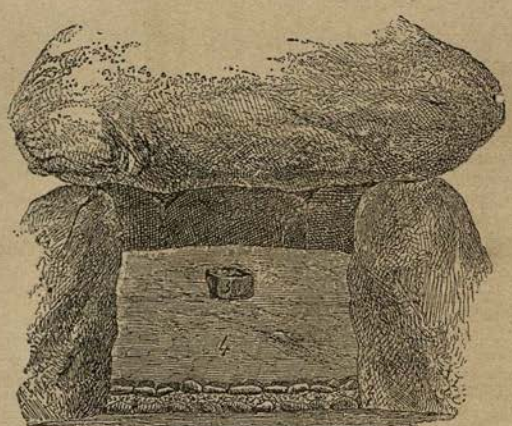


Fig. 57.—Interior of chamber with cinerary urn.—Maglehöj.

Fig. 58.—Gold vessel, ½ real size, found with ten other similar ones. All of 20-carat gold. Placed with the handles downward in the bronze urn, Fyen (see p. 101).

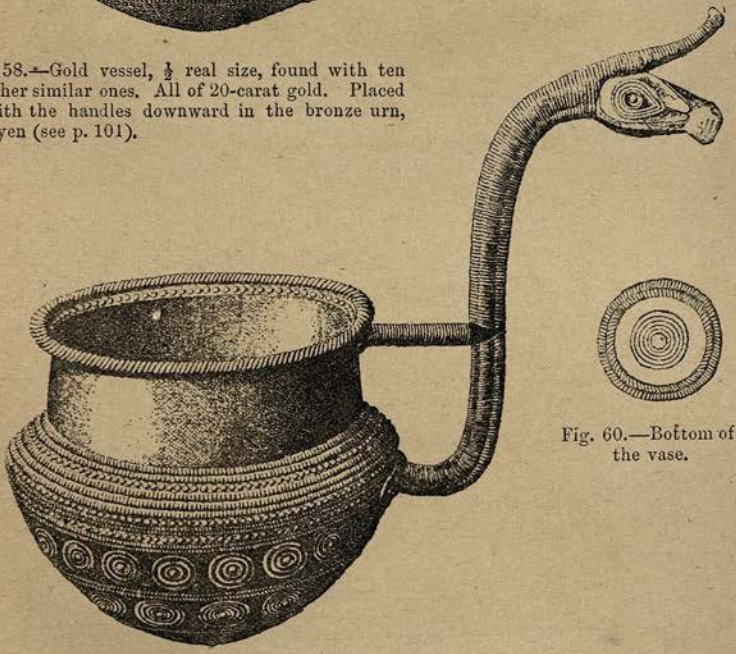


Fig. 59.—Gold vessel, ⅓ real size, handle surrounded with gold threads. Found with a gold vessel in a mound, Zeeland.

Fig. 60.—Bottom of the vase.

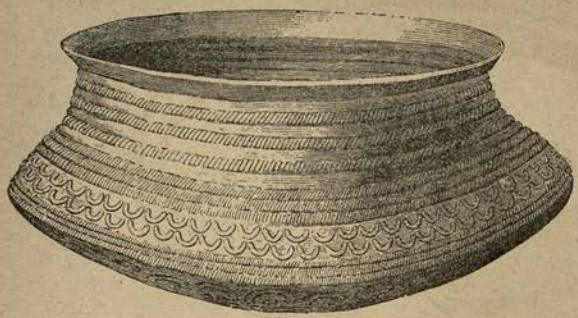


Fig. 61.—Gold vessel, about ½ real size, found under a slab, Halland. Weight, 2 oz. 5 dr.

Fig. 62.—Design forming the bottom part of the vase. ¼ real size.

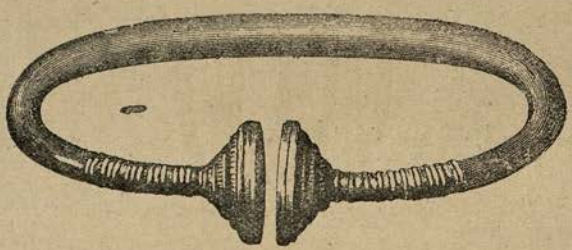


Fig. 63.—Bracelet of solid gold, ⅔ real size; weight, 6 oz.—Scania.

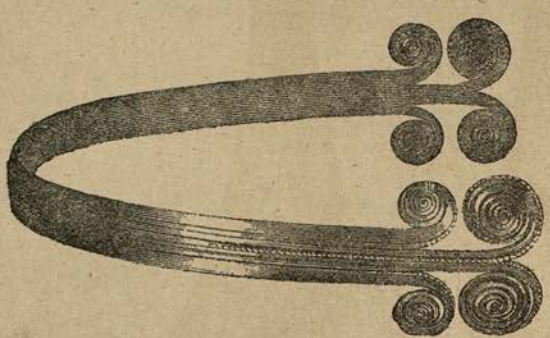


Fig. 64.—Diadem of gold, ⅔ real size, Balsby, Scania; deposited, together with four massive bronze axes, upon a slab below the surface of the ground.

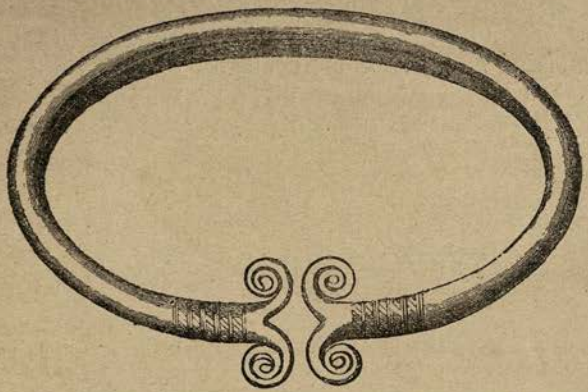


Fig. 65.—Hollow bracelet of gold, real size, found with four spiral gold bracelets near a large stone.—Skärje, Bohuslan.

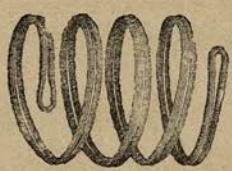


Fig. 66 —Spiral ring of double thread of gold.—Scania.

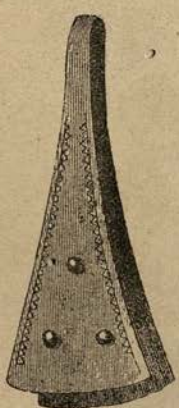


Fig. 67.—Pincers of gold. Real size.—Halland.

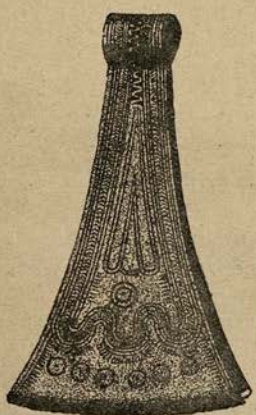


Fig. 68.—Bronze pincers. ¾ real size.—Fyen.

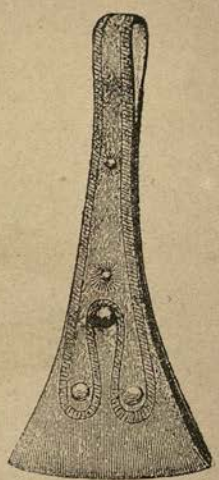


Fig. 69.—Bronze pincers. Real size.—Scania.

Vessels of bronze are uncommon in the graves; some by their form seem to be of Greek origin, while others appear to be of Northern make. Some beautifully cast, and of peculiar shape, seem to have been made to be suspended. Some are

Fig. 70.—Bronze vessel, with representation of sun ship, with prow and stern alike, as in northern ships. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Bog near Aaborg, Denmark.

ornamented with the svastica [1] and other symbolic signs, and may have been used to carry offerings to the gods.

[1] The Svastika, or Suvastika, is in its essential form a cross with bent arms 卐 卍, but with many modifications. As a symbol, it is found widespread over a large part of the Old World. It is certainly of ancient origin, but authorities are disagreed as to its symbolical significance. Other symbols equally difficult to interpret, found in Norse remains, are the three dots, circle of dots, triangles, the triskele ☋, &c.

Fig. 71.—Bronze vase, in which were found eleven gold vessels with handles like illustration. Representation of sun ship. ⅓ real size.—Bog find, Rönninge, Fyen, Denmark.

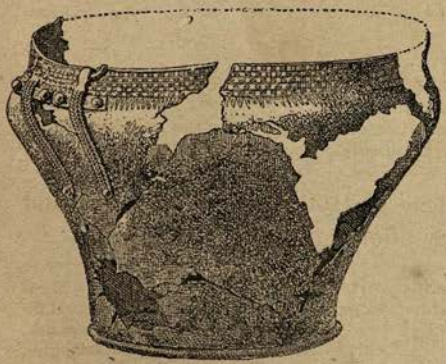


Fig. 72.—A vase of bronze found in a grave-cist in a mound, Fyen. The cist was three feet wide, built of stone slabs, with one on the top. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 73.—Bronze vase, with burnt bones, a gold arm-ring, four double buttons (two of gold and two of bronze), two bronze knives, &c., Denmark.

SOCIETY

The bogs[1] of Denmark contain large horns or trumpets, made entirely of bronze, with pendant chains (see p. 104).

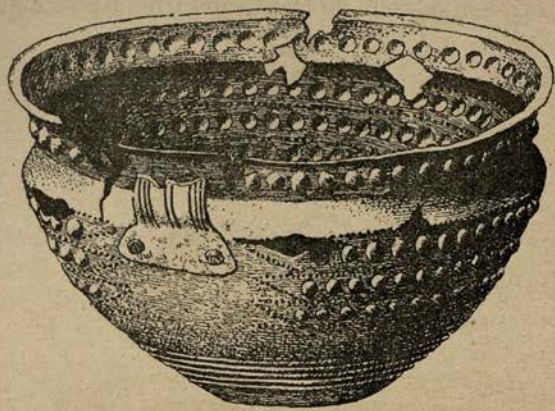


Fig. 74.—Bronze vase. ½ real size.—Broby, Denmark.

Fig. 75.—Bronze pail. ¼ real size.—Ögemose, Denmark.

[1] In a bog by Taarup several pieces of bronze, such as arm rings, spear-points, chisels, &c., were found.

Near Aarup, Jutland, two bronze ear-rings of a similar pattern, two bracelets made of convex bronze bands with engraved ornaments, a solid gold ring for the hair, three spiral-shaped loops of gold with bowl-shaped buttons at the ends. The engraved ornaments seem to point to the fact that the engraving needle was known in the bronze age.

Somewhat similar objects have been found in other bogs.

Nothing exactly corresponding to them has yet been discovered in other countries. They have been cast in several pieces, and with surprising skill, and are carefully fastened together

. 76.—Hanging vase of bronze. ½ real size.—Bog, Senäte, Vestergötland.

Fig. 77.—¼ real size. Svastica.

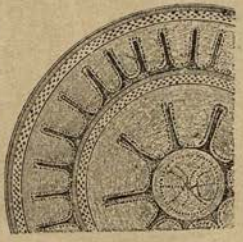


Fig. 78.—⅓ real size. Scania.

Fig. 79.—¼ real size.

Patterns of the bottom of different vases.

by rivets which interlace each other. Sometimes they have been buried in the bogs in a broken state, but generally have been so well preserved that they can still be blown. They produce a dull and not very loud sound. On one occasion

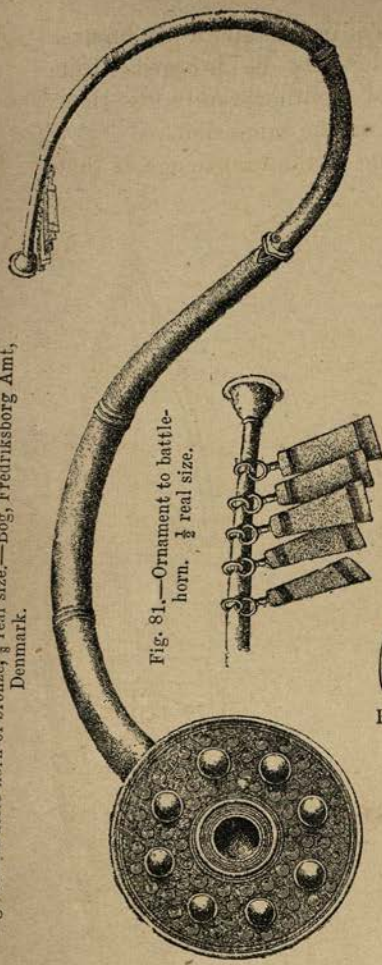


Fig. 80.—Battle horn of bronze, $\frac{1}{8}$ real size.—Bog, Fredriksborg Amt, Denmark.

Fig. 81.—Ornament to battle-horn. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

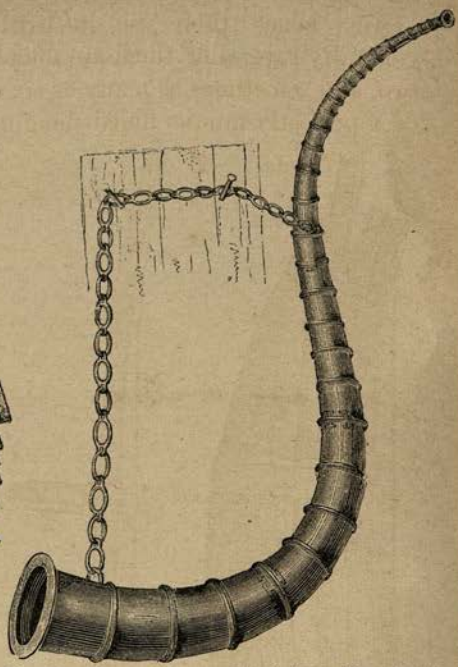


Fig. 82.—Horn of bronze, $\frac{1}{4}$ real size.—Bog, Scania, at a depth of over 6 feet.

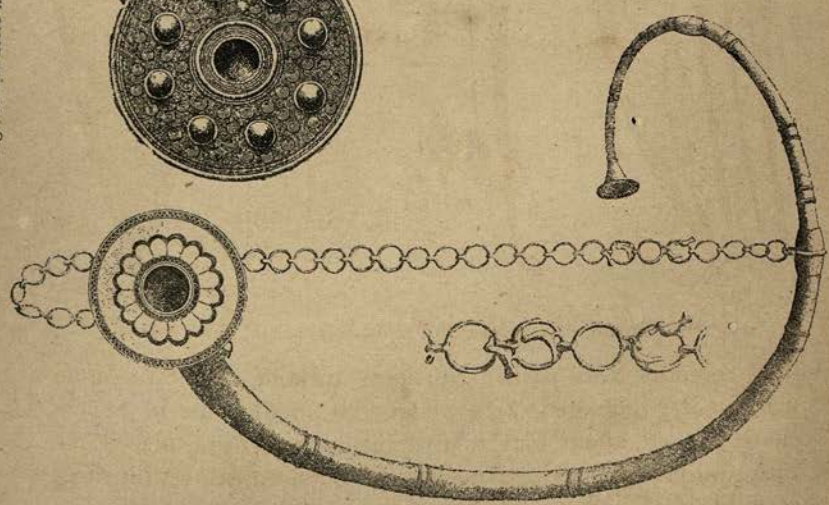


Fig. 83.—Battle horn of bronze, with chain ornamented with birds; $\frac{1}{8}$ real size, or 50 inches long. —Bog, Ribe Amt, Denmark.

they have been found with a shield of bronze and a few bronze swords, hence their use in battle may be inferred. But generally several of them are found together, rarely less than two, and sometimes as many as six on the same spot.

A perfectly unique find belonging to the bronze age is that

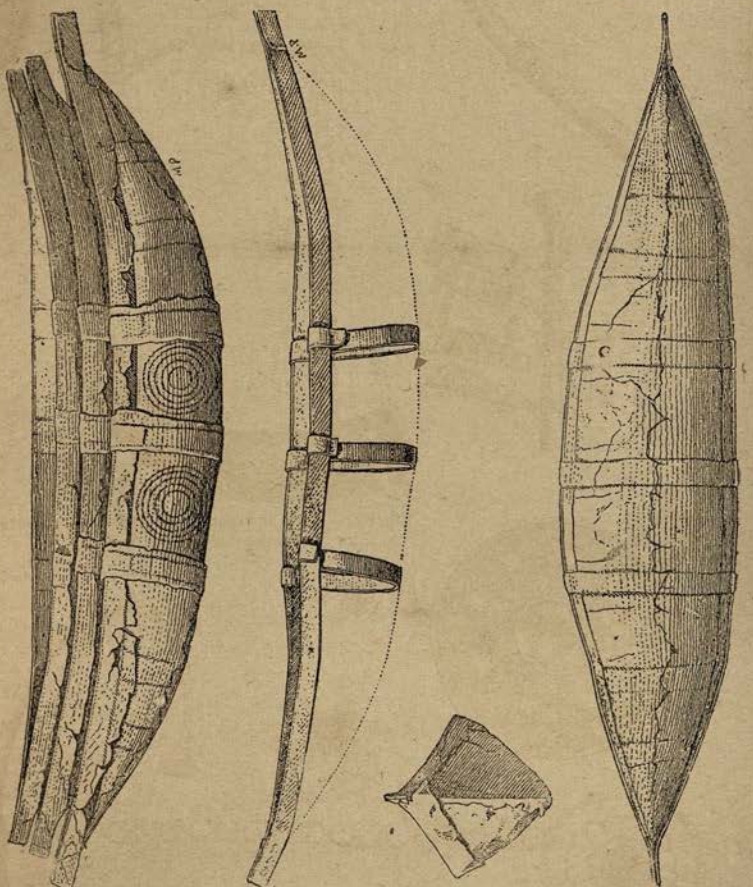


Fig. 84.—Bronze boats covered with gold.—Nors parish, North Jutland.

discovered at Nors parish, Northern Jutland, in 1885. In an urn, greatly damaged, were about 100 small boats of bronze canoe-shaped, about four to five inches in length, placed one into another, all covered inside and outside with a thin sheet of gold; some have been found to be ornamented with con-

centric rings on the side. What was the meaning of the offering or find will always remain a mystery.

The curiously-shaped knives, which are found in very great numbers, seem to be peculiar to the North, and the North of Germany. What they were used for is hard to tell, possibly as sacrificial knives. It can hardly be doubted that the signs upon them are symbolical; some may be representations of the sun-ship, others are somewhat like minute representations of the rock-tracings, or designs upon Greek coins, while the heads of horses remind us of the gold vases represented in this chapter.

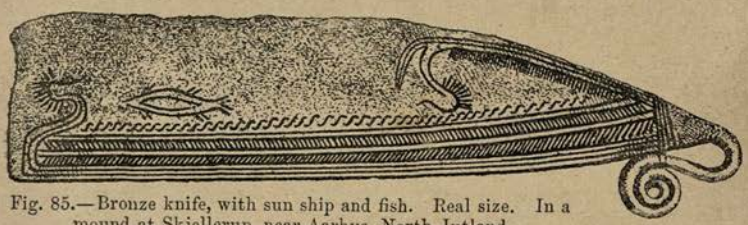


Fig. 85.—Bronze knife, with sun ship and fish. Real size. In a mound at Skjellerup, near Aarhus, North Jutland.

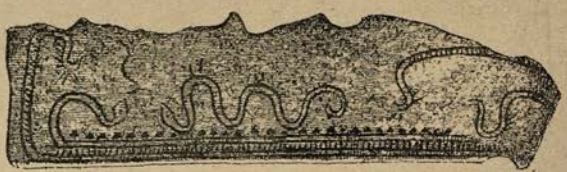


Fig. 86.—Bronze knife, without handle, with a serpent. Real size. In a mound, Jutland, with three stone coffins.

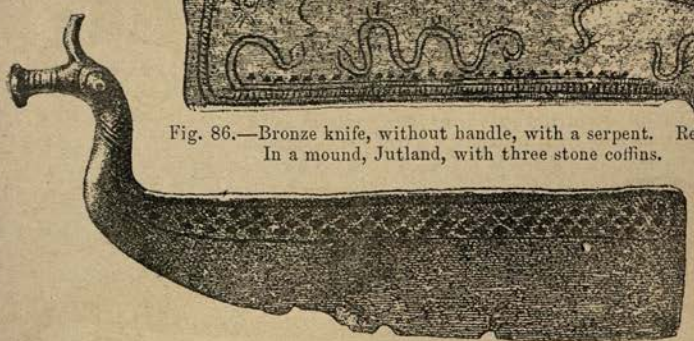


Fig. 87.—Bronze knife. Real size. Found in mound in Jutland.

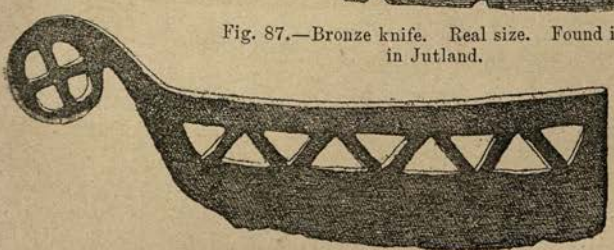


Fig. 88.—Bronze knife in clay urn, with burnt bones, two other knives, &c. ⅔ real size.—Denmark.

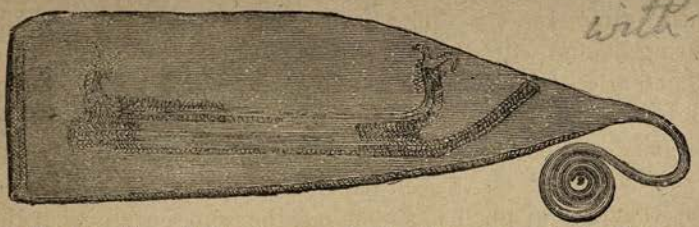


Fig. 89.—Bronze knife, with a vessel. ⅔ real size. In a mound.—Fyen.

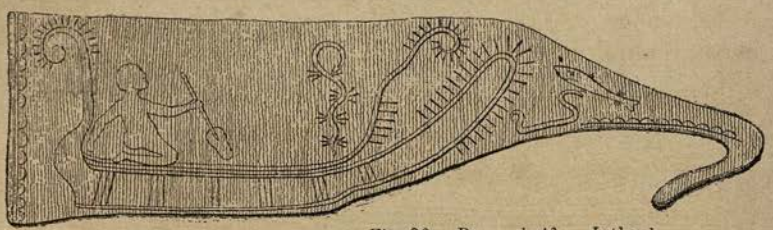


Fig. 90.—Bronze knife.—Jutland.

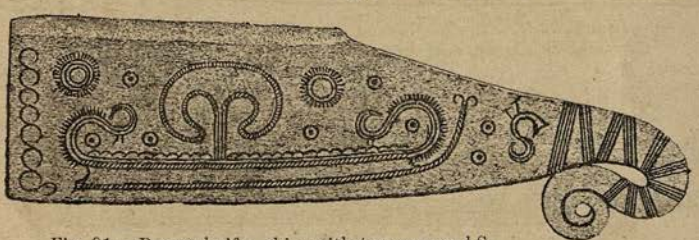


Fig. 91.—Bronze knife; ship, with two suns and S. Skanderborg Amt, Denmark. ⅔ real size.—Jutland.

Fig. 92.—Bronze knife, with ship, sun, and triskele. ⅔ real size. —In an urn in Holstein.

Fig. 93.—Bronze knife, mound at Dömmestorp, Halland, in a ruined stone cist. Real size.

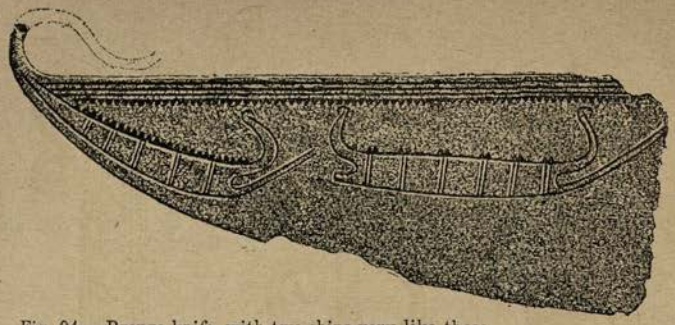


Fig. 94.—Bronze knife, with two ships very like those on rock-tracings. Real size.—In a mound near Vimose on Fyen.

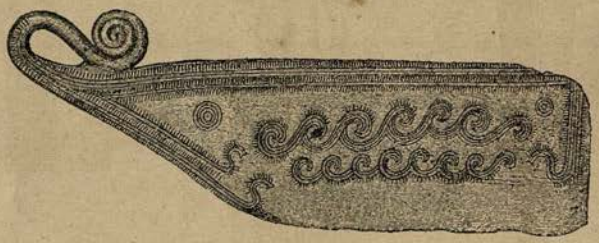


Fig. 95.—Bronze knife, Scania. Real size.—Scania.

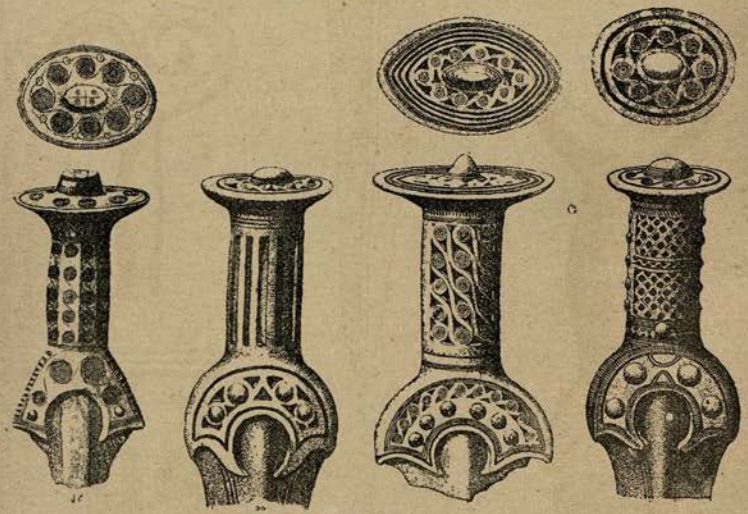


Fig. 96.—In a mound.—Zeeland.

Fig. 97.—Found in a field in Fyen, near Svendborg, with two other swords.

Fig. 98.

Fig. 99.—Found with bones and charcoal in a mound.—Fyen.

Handles of bronze swords. ⅓ real size.

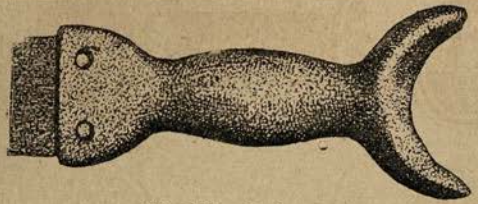


Fig. 100.—Real size.

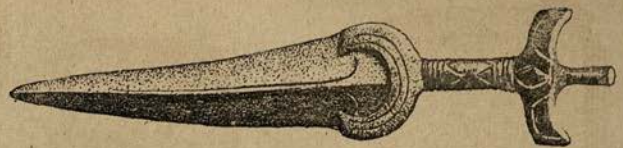


Fig. 101.—Real size.

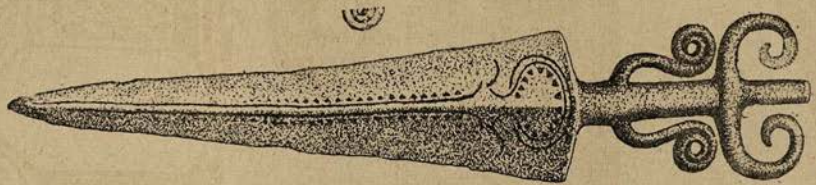


Fig. 102.—Real size.—Zeeland.

Daggers.
Varying in size from 3 inches to 6½ inches.

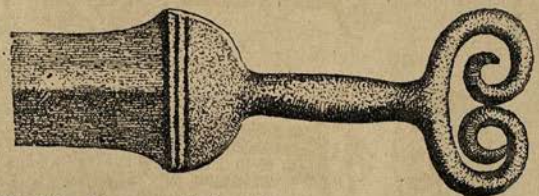


Fig. 103.—In urn with burnt bones, together with a bronze knife, tongs, and an arrow-point. Real size.—Möen.

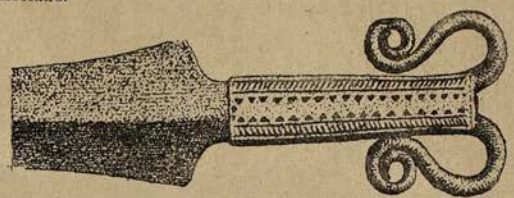


Fig. 104.—Real size.—Möen.

In a field in the side of a lake with 163 pieces of bronze.

Fig. 105.—½ real size.

Fig. 106.—½ real size.

Found with Fig. 105.

Fig. 107. ¼ real size.

Fig. 108.—½ real size.

Spear-heads, bronze.

Fig. 109.—In a bog, Falster. ⅓ real size.

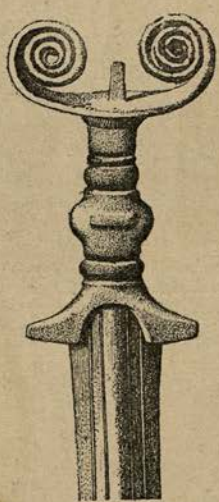


Fig. 110.—In a bog, Jutland. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 111.—In mound, Jutland. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 112.—Upper part of bronze sword. ½ real size.—Scania.

Swords.—These peculiar bronze swords are found in various towns in England and Germany.

Fig. 113.—Spear-point of bronze. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size. In a heap of coals with twenty other spear-points.—Nordre Aurdal, Christiania.

Fig. 114.—Spear-head of bronze. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Fálköping, Vestergötland.

Fig. 115.—Knife of bronze. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size. In stone coffin in a mound, Island of Möen, in the Baltic, with a sword and a knife.

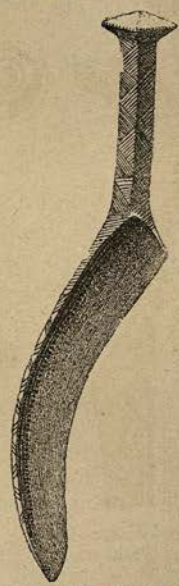


Fig. 116.—Knife of bronze. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 117.—Knife of bronze. ⅓ real size. In mound, Zeeland.

Fig. 118.—Knife of bronze. ½ real size. — Halland, Sweden.

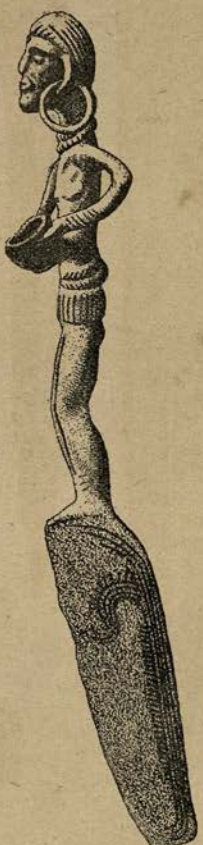


Fig. 119. ½ real size. In urn, Holstein.

Fig. 120. ⅓ real size. In urn, Fyen.

Knives of bronze.

Fig. 121.—Bronze sword. ⅓ real size.—Vestergotland.

Fig. 122.—Sword of bronze. ⅓ real size.—Lake Ljungsjon, Uppland.

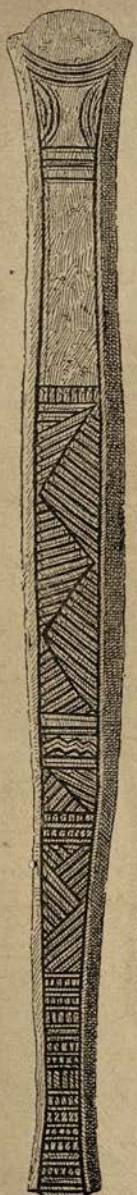


Fig. 123.—Dagger of bronze; full length, 24 inches.—Kongshöi find, Denmark.

Fig. 124. — Leather sheath for bronze dagger, handle of horn; in tumulus at Dömmestorp, Halland.

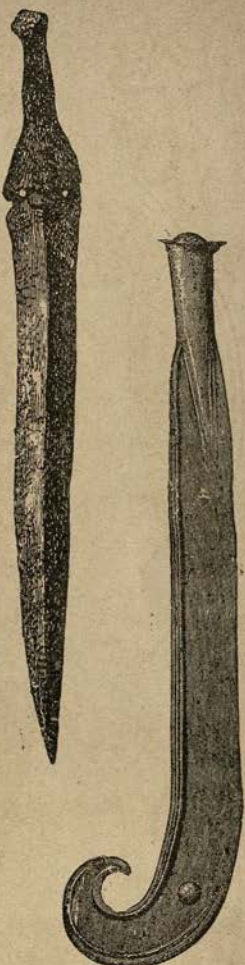


Fig. 125. — One-edged bronze sword, found in a bog, Östergötland, Sweden. Length, about 20 inches. The only one of this type found in the North. Prof. Stephens in his 'Runic Monuments' shows that the type is Assyrian, and that it has come by the trade routes through Russia into Sweden from Asia.

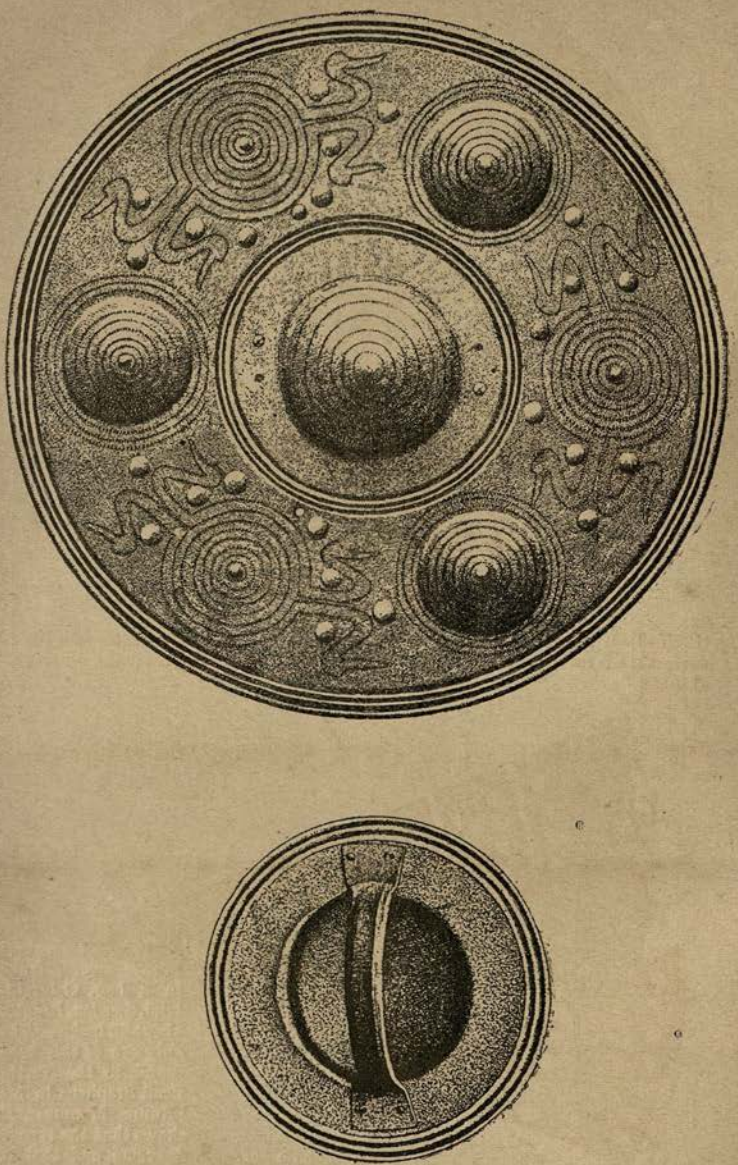


Fig. 26.—Bronze shield with handle. ⅓ real size.—Denmark.

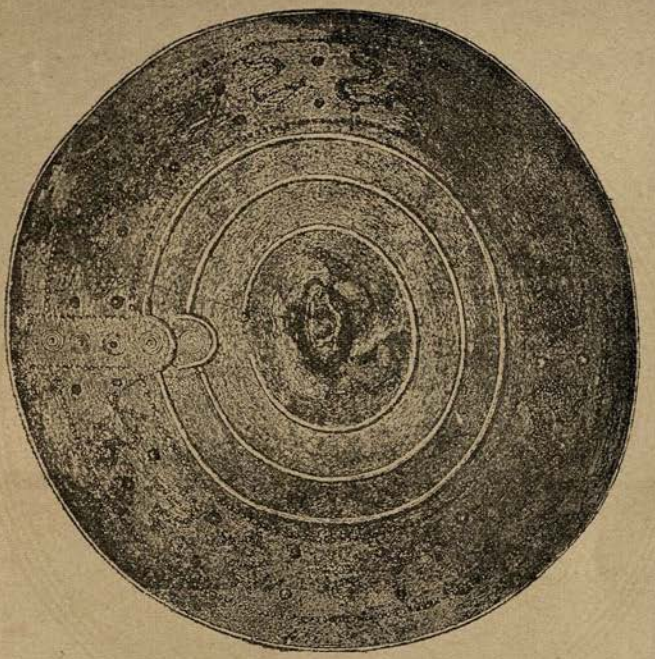


Fig. 127.—Thin shield of bronze, $\frac{1}{8}$ real size, found in a bog at a depth of a little more than 3 feet; 66 inches full size diameter; bird-like figures round centre.—Halland.

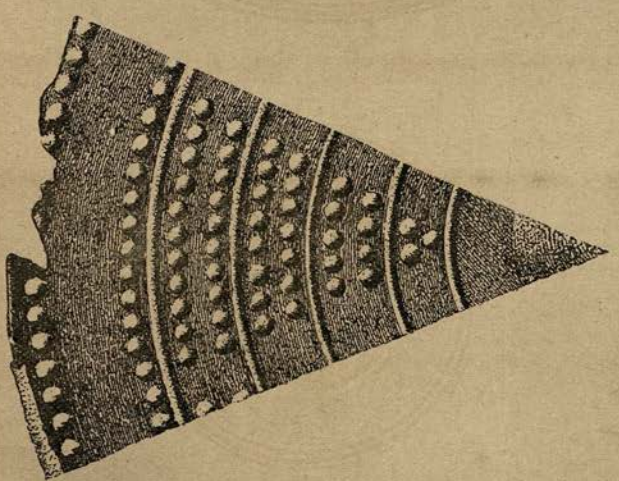


Fig. 128.—One-eighth part of a small bronze shield, measuring only 27 inches in diameter, containing eight triangles; $\frac{1}{2}$ size. In a bog, Falster.

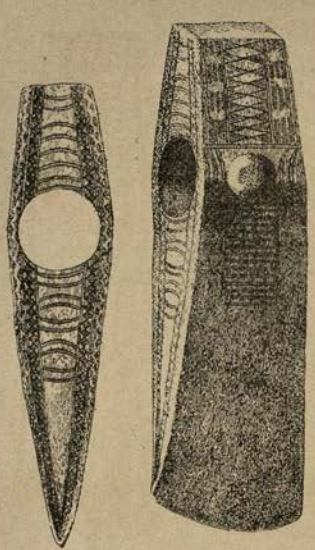


Fig. 129.—$\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Flensborg amt, Denmark.

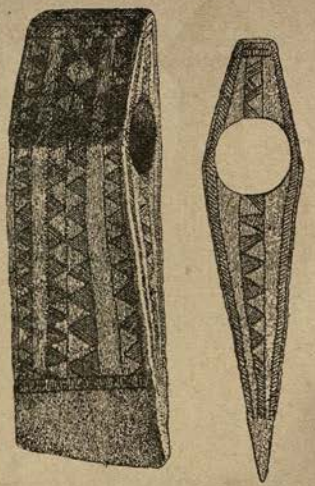


Fig. 130.—$\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

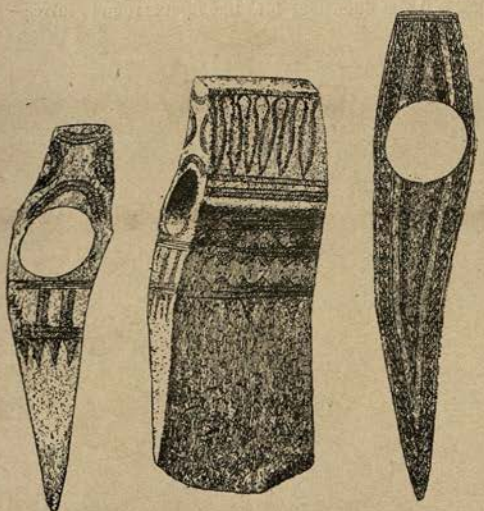


Fig. 131.—Massive bronze axe, $\frac{1}{3}$ real size, ornamented on three sides.—Veile amt, Denmark.

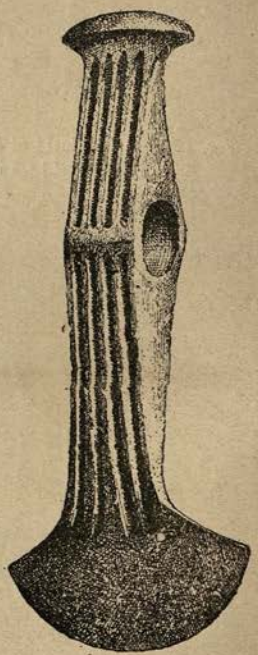


Fig. 132.—In Randersfjord, Jutland. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

Bronze axes.

Fig. 133.—Bronze axe; ½ real size.—Scania.

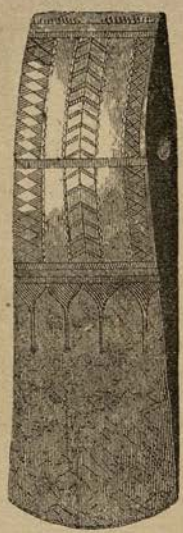


Fig. 134.—Bronze axe; ½ real size.—Bohusläu, Sweden.

Fig. 135.—⅓ real size. Ploughed up in a field, Zeeland.

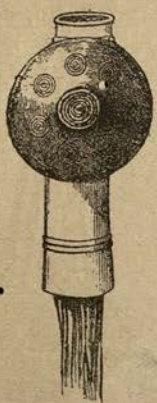
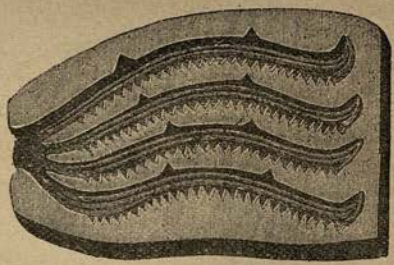


Fig. 136.—Fragment of bronze axe, ½ real size, with handle of oak.—Near Eskilstuna, Södermanland.

Fig. 137.—Axe of thin layer of bronze, ⅛ real size, cast upon a mould of clay, ornamented with some round plaques of gold, in the midst of which are pieces of amber.—Södermanland, Sweden.



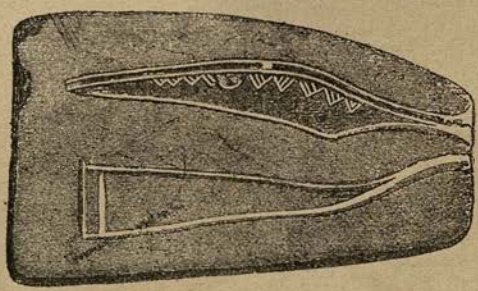


Fig. 138.—Two forms of stone for casting; one for four saws, the other for two knives. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Scania.

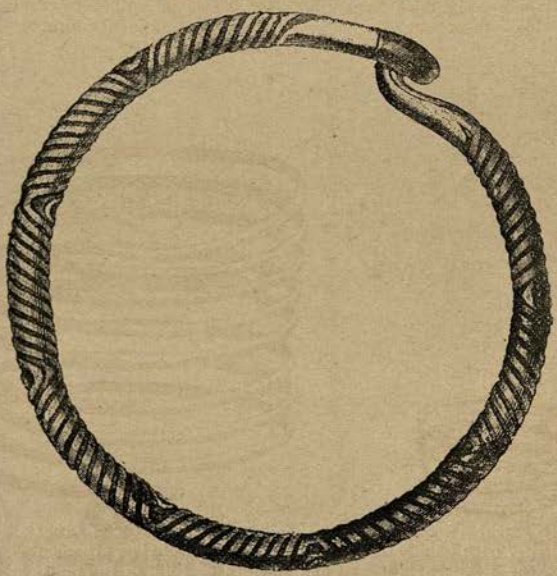


Fig. 139.—Necklace of bronze. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Bog, V.-Götland.

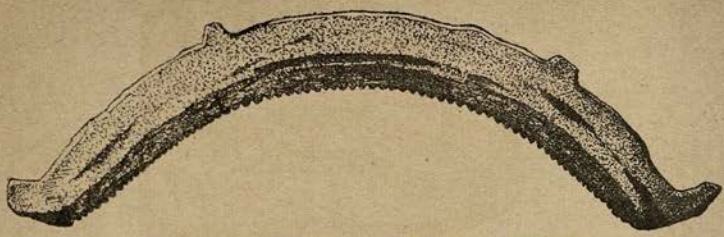


Fig. 140.—Saw of bronze. ½ real size.—Denmark.

Fig. 141.—Bronze ring. Real size.—Denmark.

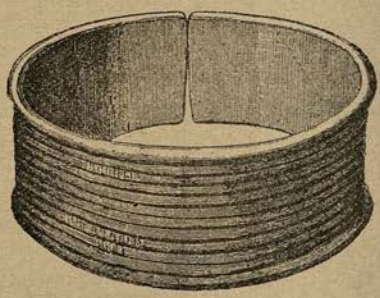


Fig. 142.—One of two bronze bracelets round wrist of skeleton in tumulus, Dömmestörp, Halland. ⅔ real size.

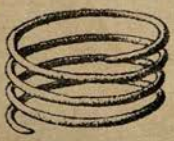


Fig. 143.—Bronze ring. Real size.—Denmark.

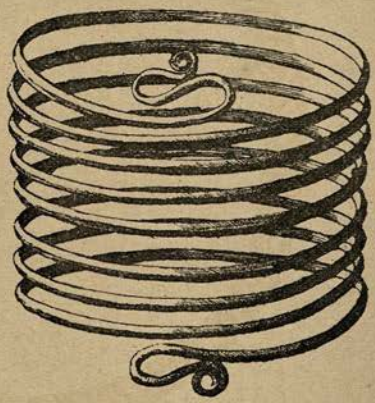


Fig. 144.—Bronze bracelet. ½ real size. —Denmark.

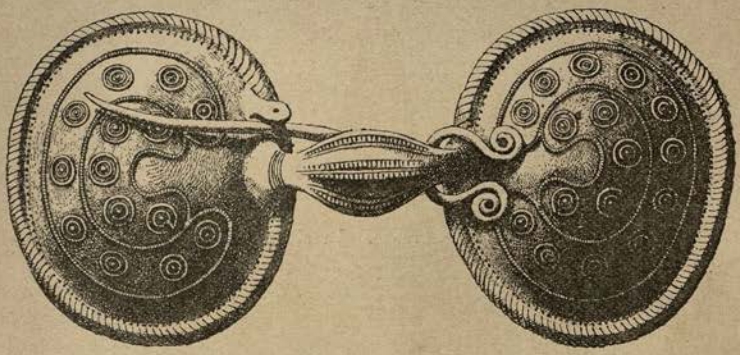


Fig. 145.—Fibula of bronze. $\frac{3}{4}$ real size. Found with a bronze ring in bog, Zeeland.

Fig. 146.—Head ornament or hair-ring. Little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ size.

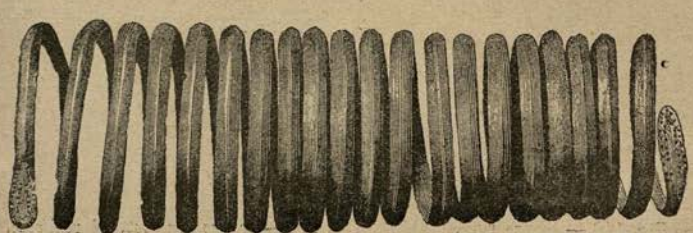


Fig. 147.—Long spiral bracelet, found near a big stone, Scania.

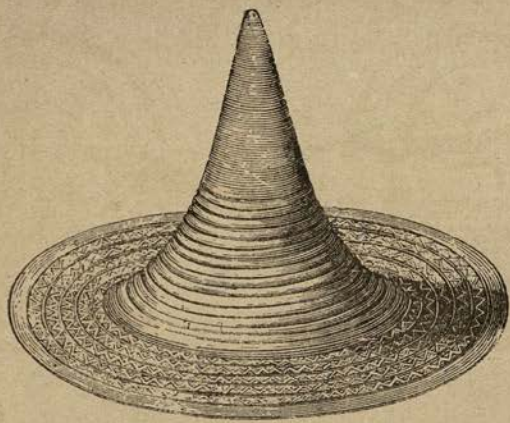


Fig. 148.—Tutulus of bronze, with many other objects, in a large mound at Bosgården, near Lund, Sweden.

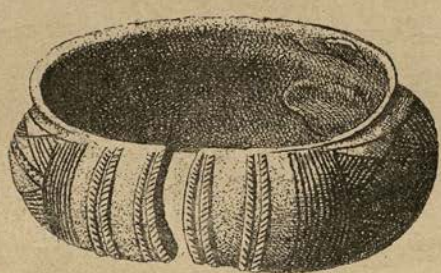


Fig. 149.—Bracelet. ½ real size.—Denmark.

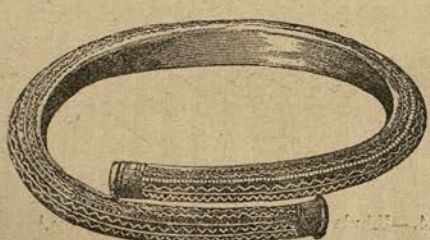


Fig. 150.—Bracelet of bronze. ⅜ real size.—Scania.

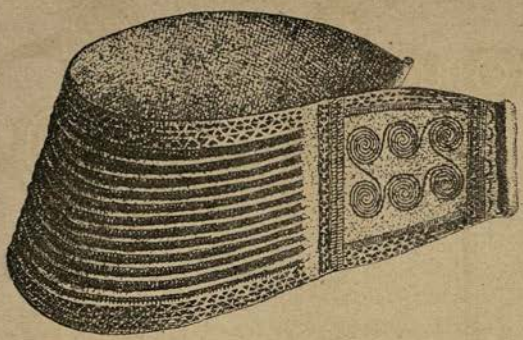


Fig. 151.—Diadem of bronze. ½ real size.—Denmark.

Fig. 152.—Button of bronze. Real size.—Scania.

Fig. 153.—Button found with other objects in a small clay urn, with burnt bones, surrounded by little slabs; real size.—Dömmestorp, Halland.

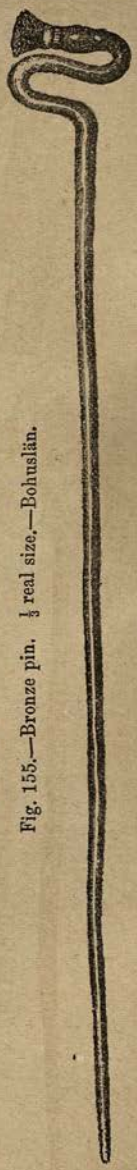


Fig. 155.—Bronze pin. ⅓ real size.—Bohuslän.

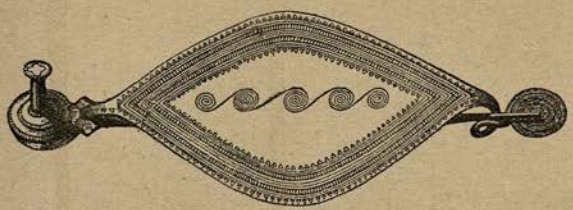


Fig. 154.—Fibula of bronze. ⅔ real size.—Scania.[1]

[1] See 'Land of the Midnight Sun' for other ornaments of bronze.

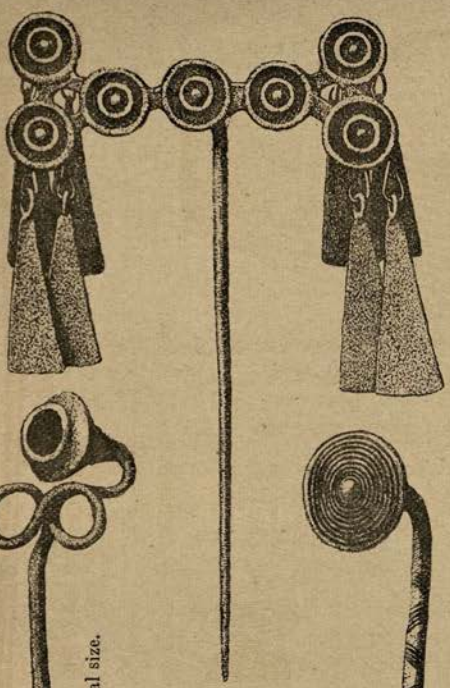


Fig. 157.—Found in a bog among the contents of a bronze vessel — rings, pins, knives, etc. ½ real size.—Fyen.

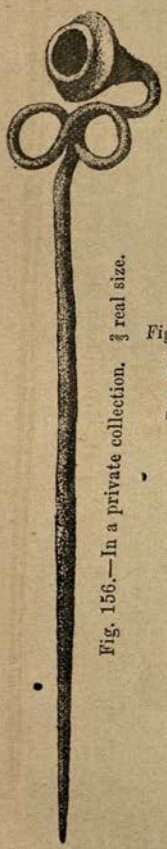


Fig. 156.—In a private collection. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 158.—⅔ real size.—Jutland.

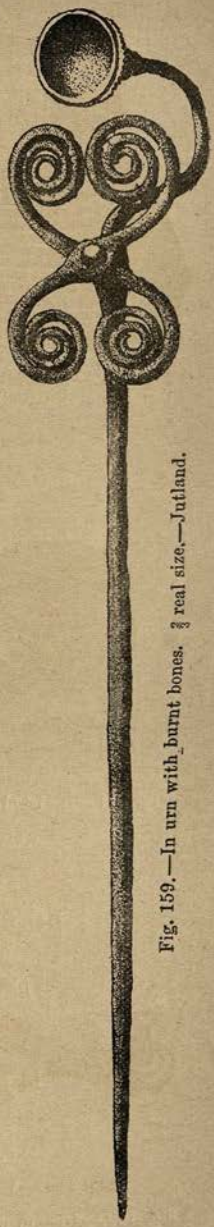


Fig. 159.—In urn with burnt bones. ⅔ real size.—Jutland.

Bronze pins.

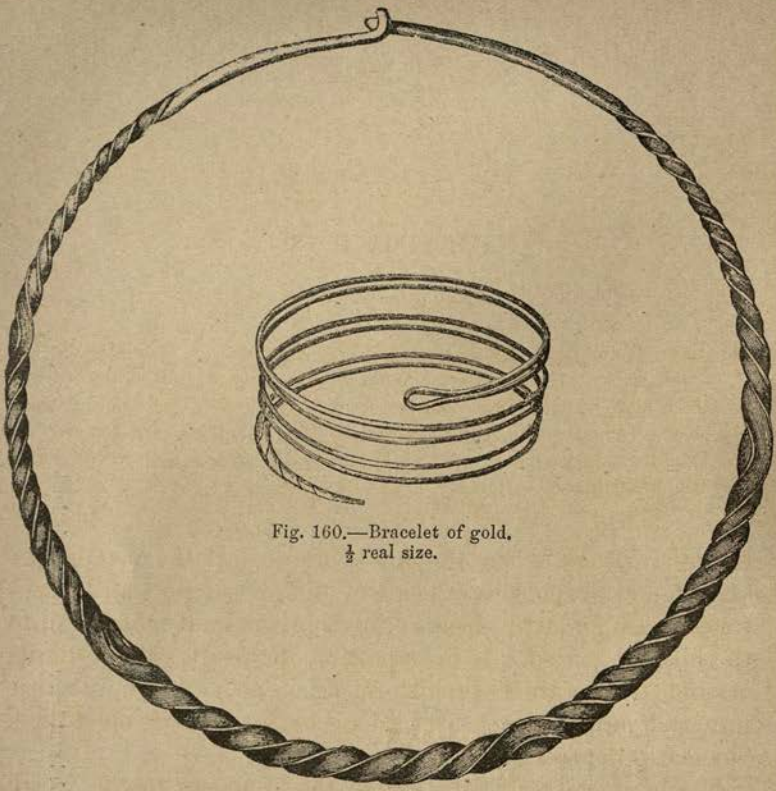


Fig. 160.—Bracelet of gold.
½ real size.

Fig. 161.—Twisted necklace of bronze, ½ real size, found in a bog at a depth of 1m. 5c. at Langhö, Södermanland.

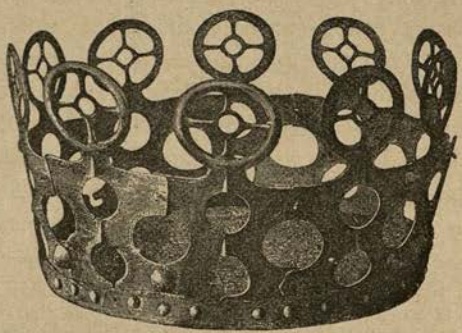


Fig. 162.—Ornament of bronze, ⅛ real size, for wooden pail.—Bog of Balkåkra, near Ystad, Scania.

CHAPTER X.

THE IRON AGE.

The three historic ages overlap each other—Division of the iron age by archæologists—Gradual development in the mode of burial during the three ages—Appearance of silver, lead, and glass—Greek and Roman objects—Cinerary deposits—Cremation—The Kannikegaard cemetery—Primitive kettle-shaped graves—Intentional destruction of weapons and armour in graves—Cinerary urns—Symbolic signs—Ornaments of the iron age.

In the iron age, when the knowledge of all the metals was known, and weapons were made of iron, bones were still sometimes used for arrow-heads; this age gradually merges into the historic period. It is impossible to assign definite limits of time to the three prehistoric ages; they run by degrees into each other; the classification specifies no division of time, but marks degrees of development in man.

Northern archæologists divide the iron age in the North into the *earlier, middle,* and *later* iron age, in the same manner as they have divided the preceding stone and bronze ages; and it may safely be said that in all these ages the North surpasses other countries in the beauty and number of its objects. All the antiquities, as well as the Eddas and Sagas, plainly show that the people who inhabited the eastern and southern shores of the present Scandinavia[1], the islands of the Baltic, and the southern shores of that sea, to a certain distance inland, which now comprise Northern Germany, were of the same origin and belonged to the same race; and the

[1] During the stone and bronze ages the population of Norway was not as great as that of Sweden, Denmark, and the islands of the Baltic. It is only during the iron age that that country becomes more thickly settled, and approximates somewhat in its population to the neighbouring countries; bronze finds have occurred in Norway as far north as 66° 10′ N. latitude.

vast number of weapons of various kinds testify equally with the records to the warlike character of the people. The finish of the weapons of the later stone age is something wonderful, many of them are as polished as glass; the weapons of bronze are equally remarkable.

In the beginning of the iron age appear the shears, which are very similar to those now in use. Clothes during this period were generally kept together by pins and buckles, which have been found in great numbers; horns were used as drinking cups, and domestic vessels of glass, bronze, silver, gold, wood, or burnt clay, and objects of Roman manufacture, dice, checkers or draughtsmen, and chessmen, have also been unearthed.

At a very early period of this age remains of brynjas, or coats of ring armour, have been found in graves where burning of the dead has taken place; this shows that they were known in the North even in the beginning of the Christian era, if not before; they are also met with in graves of a later period, and in the bog finds of the third and fourth century.

Along with iron the people became also acquainted with silver, lead, glass, &c., and knew the art of soldering and gilding metals. The jewels and ornaments in their design and workmanship show a considerable advance in taste.

At what time the use of iron began to be known among the people and when it superseded bronze is impossible to tell: the change must have taken place a long time before the ships of the Suiones were described by Tacitus, a wonderful example of the accuracy of whose description is found in the Nydam boat of which I will speak hereafter. Iron is very abundant in Sweden and Norway, and bog iron was no doubt plentiful in the islands of the Baltic; the use of the latter is proved by masses of slag, weapons, &c. found in the earliest graves of the iron age. The use of the bronze of the preceding period continued, and many objects of bronze are evidently of home manufacture.

The earliest graves[1] belonging to this iron age in the North

[1] Mixed finds precede the advent of each age. Stone implements or weapons are found together with those of bronze, and later bronze implements, which are the forerunners of the approaching iron age, are found with those of iron. Examples of such are—a grave at Stonholt, Viborg Amt, containing pearl of glass mosaic, with bronze poniard; grave at Alstrup, Aalborg Amt, containing iron

are called by Northern archæologists *depôts cineraires* (cinerary deposits). These graves are round bowl-shaped holes, the excavations being from about two to four feet in diameter, and three to four feet deep: into these the remains of the funeral pyre, such as burnt bones of the corpse, ashes, charcoal, fragments of clay, urns, ornaments, jewels, other objects

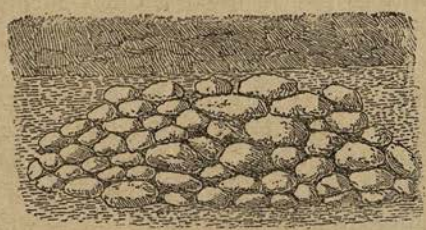


Fig. 163.—Cinerary deposit. Hole, filled with stones, 4½ feet deep, 3 feet in diameter.—Fyen.

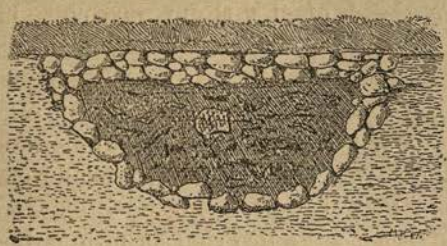


Fig. 164.—Cinerary deposit. Grave, 5 feet in diameter, 4 feet deep, lined with cobble stones, burnt bones, and broken fragments of clay urns.—Fyen.

Fig. 165.—Cinerary deposit. Grave, 16 feet long, 6 feet wide, running from north-west to south-west, with hole 2½ feet deep, containing burnt bones and fragments of ornamented clay urns, remains of a large one-edged knife, &c.—Grönneskev field, Fyen.

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weapons alongside an urn in which were a knife and ring of bronze; grave at Assens on Fyen, containing early iron age fibula, with bronze knife, saw, and needle; at Helsinge Zealand, grave with iron pin and bronze objects; at Brandtbjerg, near Sorö, Zealand, fragments of iron fibula and objects from bronze age, &c.

and weapons are thrown in, without order or method. The burnt bones and the charcoal are scattered sometimes over a bed covering a certain space, or sometimes in a heap together.

In other graves the antiquities are found resting on the black mould itself. What were the causes which led to the temporary disuse of the mound-burials we cannot tell.

Then came a period when after the burning of the corpse on the pyre the pieces of the bones were gathered into urns of clay, wooden buckets with metal mountings, vessels of bronze or glass bowls; these latter being very rare. These urns, &c., which are frequently found covered, for protection, by other vessels, were placed in chambers of varying sizes, those of the earliest graves being made of slabs, and just large enough to contain the sepulchral urn.

It should be mentioned that the development of the form of these graves runs in an unbroken chain, beginning with the large grave chamber of the stone age, and culminating in the insignificant receptacles for preserving a mere handful of burnt bones.

These graves are found sometimes singly, and at others in many hundreds, and even thousands, together.

The Kannikegaard cemetery on the island of Bornholm in the Baltic, and that of Möllegaard by Broholm on the island of Fyen, are perhaps the two richest antiquarian fields of the earliest iron grave period. Kannikegaard must have been a very large common graveyard; it is over 1,000 feet long and over 150 feet wide, and formed, no doubt, part of a more extensive burial ground, as there are other graves some 200 feet further on. In nearly all the graves scorched stones have been found, often in such quantities that they nearly fill the grave; a clay urn was also often found standing at the bottom of the burnt spots or lying on its side, sometimes with the bottom up or in broken pieces; many graves contain no antiquities, and hold only burnt bones and charcoal.[1]

[1] Broholm, situated on the S.E. coast of Fyen, forms the centre of the area of a magnificent archæological field, which extends about four kilometres all around it. In order to give an adequate idea of the richness of the place, I cannot do better than use the language of the late Herr F. Sehested, who in three summers discovered more than 10,000 different pieces belonging to the three ages above mentioned.

In no other part of Europe do we see such a vast number of graves of this period, showing that the North must then have been inhabited by a far more dense population than other countries; from the number and contents of these *depôts cineraires*, we gather that the population burned its dead in large burial-grounds.

The practice of burning the dead had already become common in the latter part of the bronze age, and prevailed most extensively, if not entirely, during the iron period immediately following it.

Connected with the burning of the dead was the intentional damage done to objects which were exposed to the heat of the funeral pyre. Special care seems to have been taken to render swords and other weapons thoroughly useless. Swords are cut on the edges, bent and twisted; shield bosses are dented or flattened; and jewels and other objects are entirely ruined, and the illustrations seen in these volumes will show how thorough the destruction was. Bent swords and shield bosses, &c., were sometimes placed over the cinerary urn, at other times they were put at their side.

We find that the same custom also existed during the cremation period of the bronze age,[1] many of the swords of that period being broken in several places.

Among the objects most commonly found are shears, iron knives, silver and bronze fibulæ, glass beads, melted or whole in many of which the colours are unaltered, and as fresh as if made to-day; iron and bone combs, tweezers of iron, amber beads, buckles, dice, draughtsmen, fragments of trappings for horses and waggons, ornaments of gold and silver, fragments of cloth, weapons, iron keys, fragments of bronze and iron vessels, iron clinch nails, spurs of bronze and iron (showing that horses were used at a very early period in the North), clay urns, &c., &c. A remarkable fact is that the earliest

[1] In an urn in a mound near Veile, Jutland, was found a bent bronze poniard; and in another mound at Mors, Jutland, an urn containing burnt bones and a bent bronze poniard.

Sehested mentions (1) a bronze sword broken in four pieces, total length about 2 feet 8 inches with point missing; (2) fragments of a bronze sword with hollow handle broken at the top of the handle; (3) handle of sword with fragments of broken blade; (4) fragments of a spear-head broken near its socket. These objects had been intentionally rendered useless.

swords seem to be chiefly single-edged, a departure from the

Fig. 166.—Axe, ruined by cuts on its edge.—Norway.

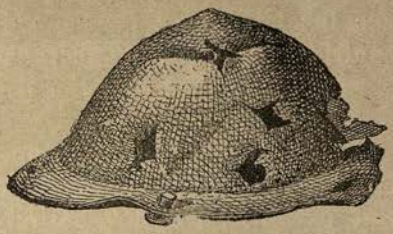


Fig. 167.—Shield boss, ruined by cuts, Norway. Found with a double-edged sword, blade broken in two places, a bit for a horse, &c. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

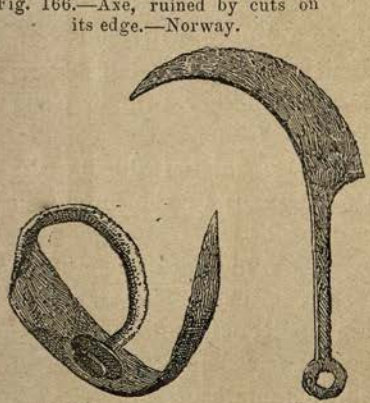


Fig. 168. Fig. 169. Fig. 170.

Half-moon shaped knives, sharp on the outside edge, with one end ending in a loop or ring, and the handle twisted; found at Kannikegaard. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size

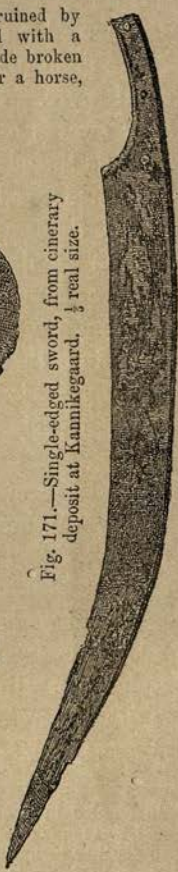


Fig. 171.—Single-edged sword, from cinerary deposit at Kannikegaard. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 172.—Found in cinerary deposit at Kannikegaard, one of nineteen nearly perfect swords. $\frac{1}{4}$ real size.

shape of the bronze swords: the fragments of the shields are of wood, with heavy iron bosses and handles.

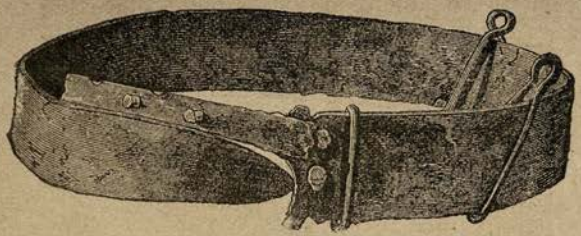


Fig. 173.—Double-edged sword, found over a clay urn with burnt bones. ½ real size.—Öland.

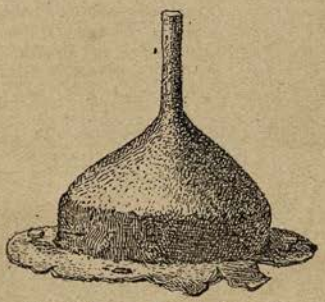


Fig. 174.—Shield boss. ½ real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 175.—Sword of iron, found with unburnt bones, fragments of a knife, and wooden scabbard. Kannikegaard. ⅛ real size.

Fig. 176. Bronze needle. Real size. Kannikegaard.

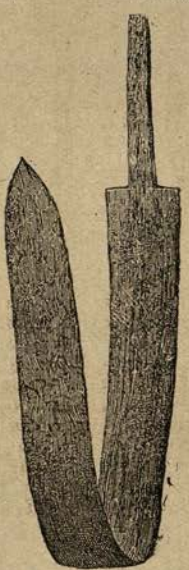


Fig. 177.—Two-edged sword, found in cinerary deposit at Kannikegaard. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 178.—Iron knife; ⅓ real size. Kannikegaard.

Fig. 179.—Sword, *Odense Amt Fyen.* ⅓ real size.

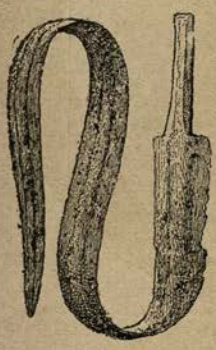


Fig. 180.—Bent sword. ⅓ real size.—Kannikegaard.

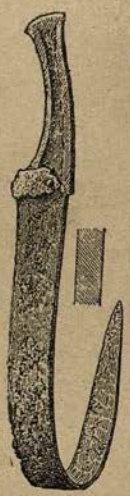


Fig. 181.—Single-edged sword, found in cinerary deposit Bornholm.

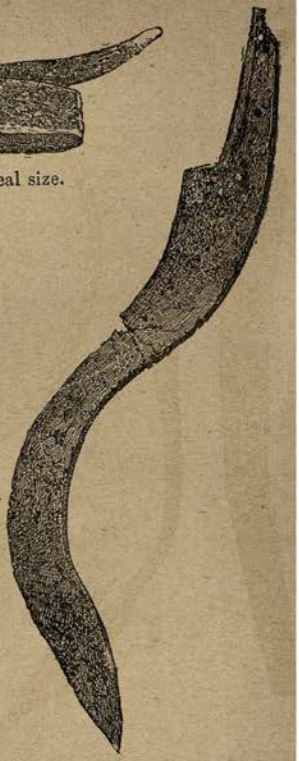


Fig. 182.—Single-edged sword, from cinerary deposit at Kannikegaard.

Fig. 183.—Sword from the grave-place near Horsens; found with a bronze kettle, containing burnt bones, a heavy finger-ring of gold, a torn shield-boss of bronze, a shield handle of iron with nails of bronze, a spear-head, two iron spurs, one pair of iron shears, two knives, one iron buckle, bronze mountings for a drinking horn, melted glass, fragments of a pan and sieve of bronze, different mountings of silver, numbers of pieces of melted iron and bronze; not far from the grave were found more than thirty urns containing burnt bones, and several skeleton graves.

Fig. 185. — Sword. ½ real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 186.—Spear-point, found near Kannikegaard. ¼ real size.

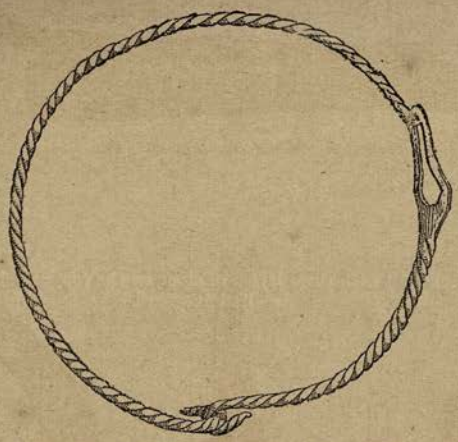


Fig. 184.—Neck-ring of silver. ½ real size. Kannikegaard.

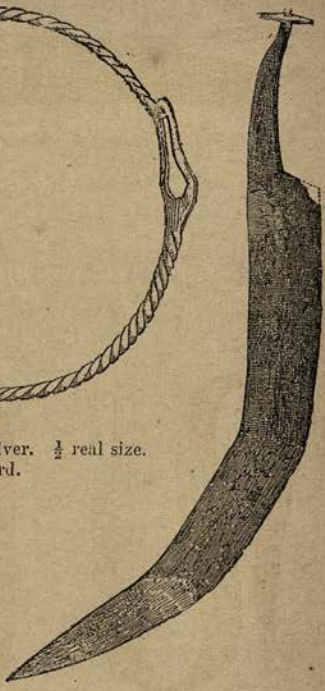


Fig. 187.—Bent sword. ½ real size.—Kannikegaard.

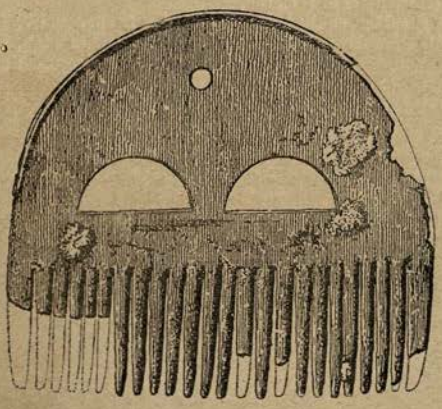


Fig. 188.—Iron comb, real size, found with an urn containing burnt bones of a child, &c., with other objects.

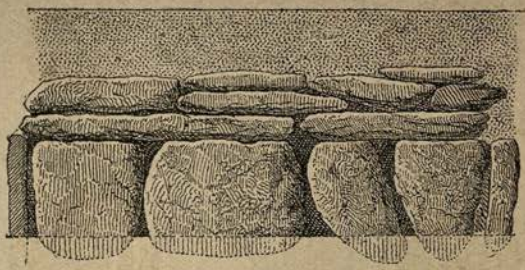


Fig. 189.—Stone cist with three layers of stone on the top, containing unburnt bones. —Kannikegaard.

Fig. 190.—Inside of stone cist. Length, 6½ feet; width, 2 feet 10 inches; height, 22 inches. On left shoulder of skeleton, under the right shoulder, on the breast and by the head, were silver fibulæ.—Kannikegaard.

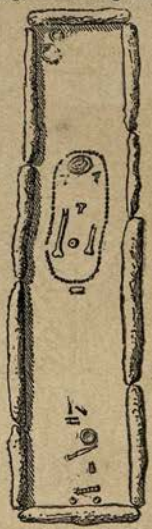


Fig. 191.—Stone coffin, 7½ feet long, 20 inches wide, 18 inches high, showing how the beads were placed.—Kannikegaard.

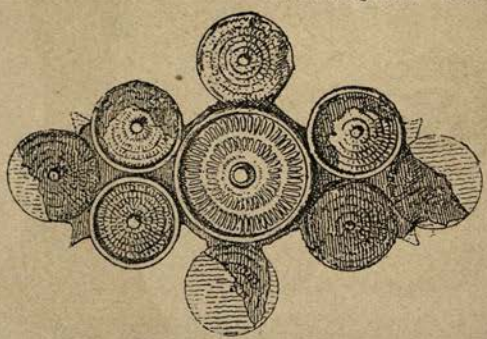


Fig. 192.—Fibula of bronze, plated with silver. ⅔ real size. Found in a piece of woollen cloth, with numerous beads, &c., in a stone coffin.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 193.—Bead of gold and silver mixed. Real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 194.—Mosaic bead, of red colour Real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 195.—Mosaic bead, real size, found with a silver ring.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 196.—Glass bead. Real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 197.—Fibula of bronze: on its pin was a piece of linen—found with mosaic beads in a stone coffin. Real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 198.—Fibula of silver, with fragments of bone comb, long knife, with remains of wooden scabbard, &c. Stone coffin 9 feet long. Real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 199.—Bead of gold and silver mixed, made of three pieces soldered together. —Kannikegaard.

Fig. 200.—Axe of iron, found together with human teeth, horn comb, &c. ½ real size.—Kannikegaard.

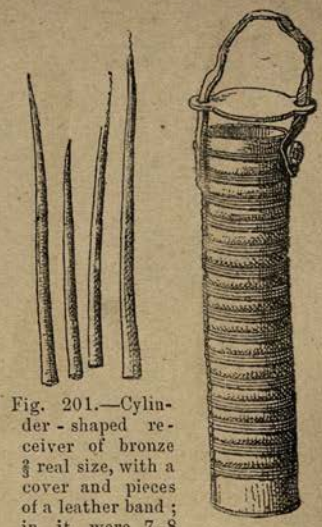


Fig. 201.—Cylinder-shaped receiver of bronze ⅔ real size, with a cover and pieces of a leather band; in it were 7–8 pointed pieces of wood, probably toothpicks or pins.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 202. — Iron sword, slightly more than ⅛ real size. — Kannikegaard.

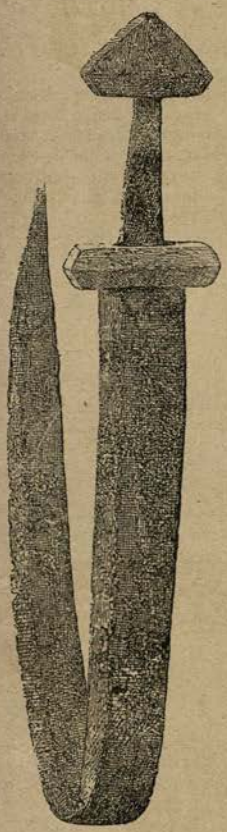


Fig. 203.—One-edged sword, from a grave-mound, Norway. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 204.—Double-edged sword, from a grave-mound, Norway, found with other damaged weapons, &c. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 205.—Iron spear-point, found in clay urn. Skovlyst, Ribe, Jutland.

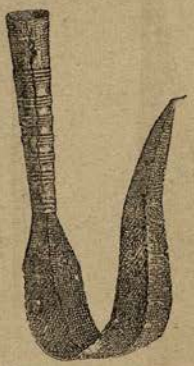


Fig. 206.—Spear-point, from a cairn, Norway; found with two unburnt bodies, seven bronze buckles, a bronze key, seven beads of glass and amber, &c. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size.

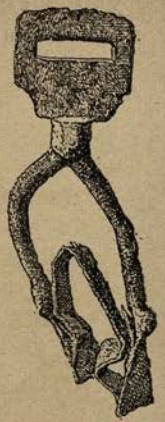


Fig. 207.—Stirrup, from a grave-mound, Norway, found with another similar stirrup, a double-edged sword, spear-point, axe blade, &c., all damaged. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size.

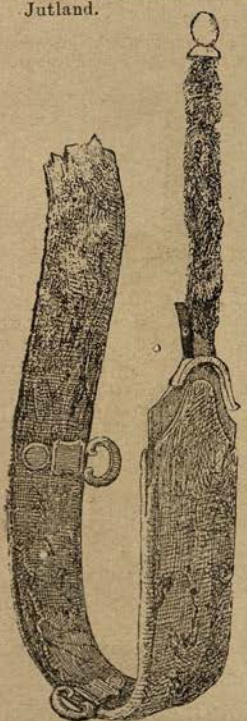


Fig. 208.—Cinerary urn and bent sword with iron sheath.—Skovlyst, Ribe, Jutland.

The cinerary urns are of different sizes and shapes, many of which are not ungraceful: the clay of which they are made is

Fig. 209.—Black clay urn, with hollow spots, $\frac{1}{4}$ real size, containing burnt bones. —Broholm, Fyen.

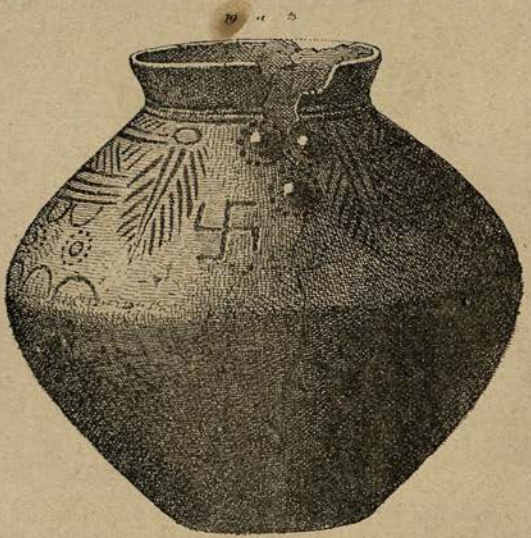


Fig. 210.—Clay urn with svastica, $\frac{1}{4}$ real size, top of which was closed by the bottom of another, containing burnt bones, a pointed iron knife, a needle of bronze, melted lumps of glass from beads of different colours, &c.—Bornholm.

of a black or greyish colour, coarse and rough, porous, and often very tender; the people even at a later period never

seeming to have been skilled in the potter's art. Many of the designs upon them are peculiar, and were, no doubt,

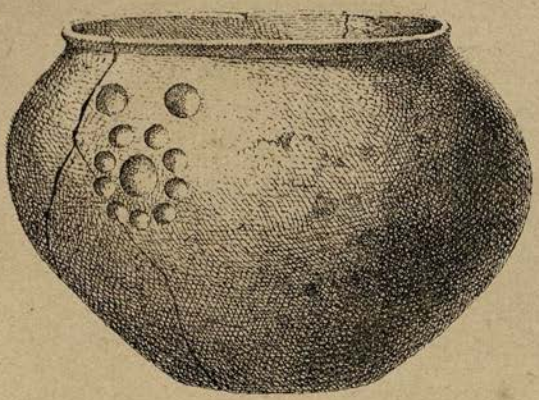


Fig. 211.—Dark brown clay urn, $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

Fig. 212.—Urn with fine vertical stripes and punctuation, containing burnt bones, bone comb with bronze rivets, ornamented with concentric lines along the back. $\frac{1}{4}$ real size.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

symbolical. Among these are circles with dots, triangles, the svastika and triad, &c., &c. Glazed pottery was unknown in the North.

Fig. 213.—Urn of dark grey colour, containing burnt bones, &c.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

Fig. 214.—Black urn, containing only burnt bones. ¼ real size.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

Fig. 215.—Urn of reddish clay, ⅓ real size, which had another urn on the top like a cover.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 216.—Small urn, real size, containing nothing but earth.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 217.—Clay urn, ⅓ real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 218.—Clay urn.—Kannikegaard.

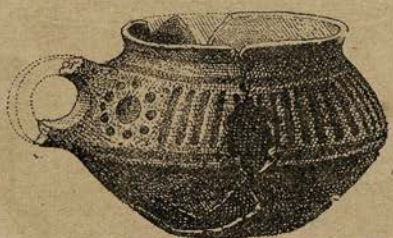


Fig. 219.—Small greyish clay urn found in a burned spot. ⅓ real size.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

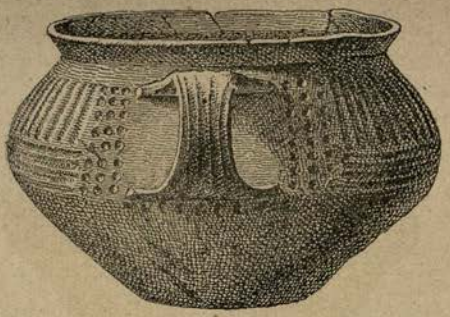
Fig. 221.

Fig. 222.

Fig. 223.

Fig. 224.

Fig. 220.—Urn, ⅓ real size, and glass mosaic beads, real size; two of the beads found were blue, with bands of red, yellow, and red; two more were blue, with a pattern repeated four times, containing black, yellow, red, and white grounds; one was white, with a wheel-like pattern, repeated three times, having a red centre and black spokes—Möllegaard, Broholm.



225.—Clay urn filled with burnt bones, and numerous objects. ¼ real size. —Möllegaard.

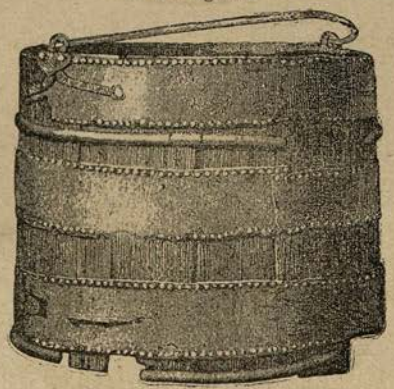


Fig. 226.—Wooden bucket with bronze hoops. ¼ real size. Found in large mound, with burnt bones, and a piece of gold spiral ring.—Norway.

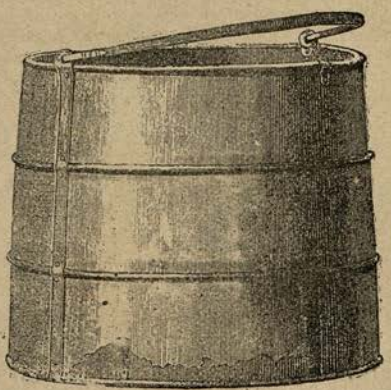


Fig. 227.—Wooden bucket, with bronze fittings. ¼ real size. Found in a large round tumulus inside a stone sepulchral chamber, with two pairs of iron scissors, fragments of two double-edged swords, fragments of several arrow-heads, two shield bosses, &c., &c.—Norway.

Fig. 228.—Clay urn, ⅓ real size, found in a tumulus with another clay urn.

Fig. 229.—Clay urn, upside down, to cover a bronze basin, of Roman manufacture, placed on a slab filled with ashes and burnt bones, fragments of bronze ornaments and glass vessels which had been exposed on the pyre; ashes and bones were scattered round, showing the burning to have taken place on the spot. ⅓ real size.—Harf Medelpad, Norway.

Fig. 230.—Clay urn in a stone cist containing the remains of a skeleton, &c. ¼ real size.—Sojvide, Gotland.

In Gotland, the graves are made of lime slabs. Some of these stone cists are not deep under the ground, and without apparently any mound.

Fig. 231.—Clay urn, $\frac{1}{3}$ real size, found in a round mound, inside a sepulchral chamber of the length of 6 feet, width 2 feet, height 1 foot 8 inches.—Norway.

Fig. 232.—Clay urn, $\frac{1}{2}$ real size, found in a mound containing a large stone cist, with fragments of iron objects and another clay urn.—Norway.

Fig. 233.—Clay urn, in a mound. Bohuslan.

Fig. 234.—Clay urn in a stone cist.—Gotland.

Fig. 235.—Clay urn, covering one filled with burnt bones. ¼ real size.—Nafverstad, Bohuslån.

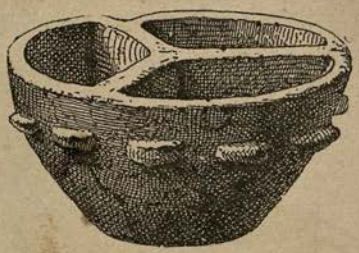


Fig. 236.—Clay urn, with three partitions (on the outside are ten knobs), found, with fragments of a belt hook, under a stone slab. ⅔ real size.—Himmelshöi, Bornholm.

237.—Clay urn, ⅓ real size, found in a round mound, inside a sepulchral chamber.—Stavanger, Norway.

Fig. 238.—Clay urn, ¼ real size, found in a mound.—Norway.

Fig. 239.—Clay urn, ¼ real size, containing burnt bones.—Norway. Earlier iron age.

Fig. 240.—Clay urn, ⅛ real size, found in a mound placed over burnt bones contained in a clay urn.—Norway. Earlier iron age.

Fig. 241.—Clay urn.—Norway. ½ real size. Skeleton grave, found with five other clay urns, a silver fibula, &c.

Fig. 242.—Clay urn filled with burnt bones and covered with another vase. ¼ real size. Found in a large round tumulus—Bohuslân.

Fig. 243.—Clay urn, containing burnt bones and fragments of a bone comb, glass beads, lever balance of spindle, &c., found, covered with a slab, in an oblong mound. ⅓ real size. Earlier iron age.

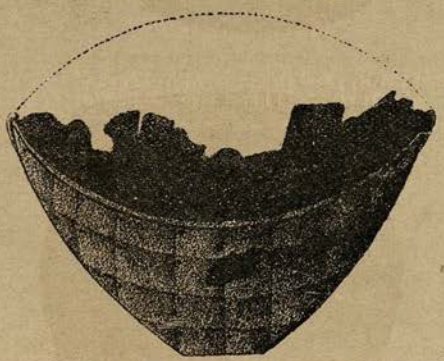


Fig. 244.—Iron urn or kettle, 10 inches high, 12¾ inches in diameter, and 6 inches deep. —Norway. Three otner kettles of same shape and workmanship have been found: one in a grave-mound.

Fig. 245.—Bronze cinerary urn; ⅓ real size.—Norway.

Fig. 246.—Bronze kettle, $\frac{1}{5}$ real size.—Norway. Found under a slab in the border of a round mound. It contained burnt bones, among which was a gold bracelet, and other objects.

Fig. 247.

Fig. 248.

Small clay vessels found in an oblong mound at Greby, Bohuslån, found with a clay urn filled with burnt bones, on which were fragments of a bone comb, glass beads, &c. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size. Earlier iron age.

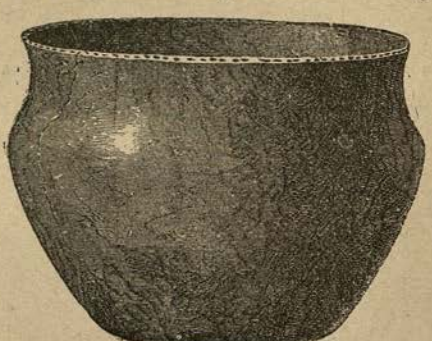


Fig. 249.—Round clay urn, found in a mound, Greby, Bohuslån, containing burnt bones and two melted glass beads, &c. $\frac{1}{4}$ real size. Earlier iron age.

Fig. 250.—Clay urn, ¼ real size, containing burnt bones, found inside a sepulchral chamber of stone, 6 feet long, nearly 4 feet wide, and 3 feet high, in a round tumulus.—Norway.

Fig. 251.—Cinerary vase of clay, ½ real size, found surrounded by burnt bones in a mound at Björkö. Later iron age.

Fig. 252.

Fig. 253.

Fig. 254.

Fig. 255.

Four of seven mosaic glass beads, real size.—Broholm grave.

Of variegated colours, yellow, white, black, blue, and red, and of different designs. Besides those represented were 26 blue glass beads, one of which had red stripes, one red, another lilac; there were also eight amber beads, different shapes, and a fibula of bronze, to which was attached a coarse woven cloth, &c.

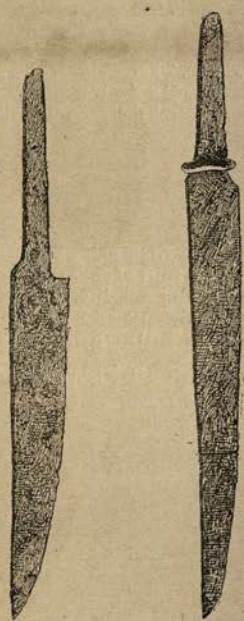


Fig. 256. Fig. 257.

Iron knives, ½ real size, in an urn on the top of burnt bones without coal and ashes.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

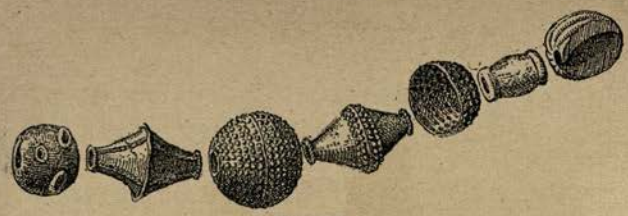


Fig. 258.

Fig. 259.—Porcelain beads, and beads of gold and silver mixed. Real size. —Bornholm. Earlier iron age.

Fig. 260.—Curved iron knife, ⅓ real size, and with the remains of a large urn containing burnt bones.

Fig. 261.—Iron knife, ⅓ real size; found in a cinerary urn containing burnt bones, two pairs of shears, a buckle, awl, and ring, all of iron; a bronze fibula, &c.—Möllegaard, Broholm.

The following objects in one grave in Möllegaard will give a thorough idea of the destruction wrought on the pyre.

Fig. 262.—Handle of iron for kettle.—Möllegaard.

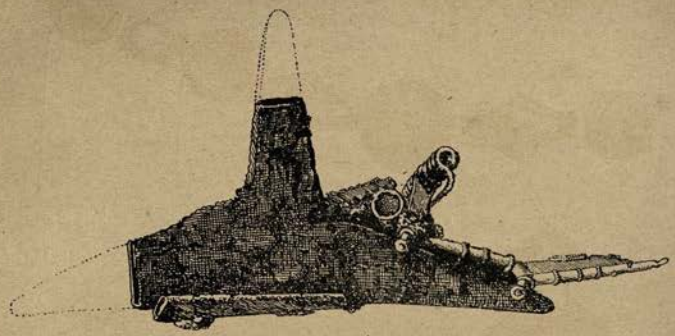


Fig. 263.—Remains of a damaged iron instrument and silver fibula rusted together. Real size.

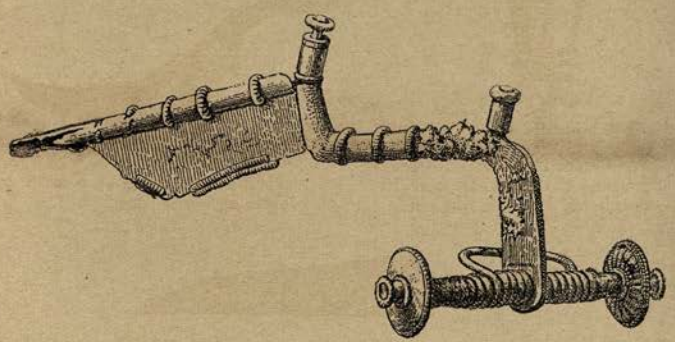


Fig. 264.—Silver fibula and other objects rusted together. Real size.

Fig. 265.—Iron comb, ½ real size. Möllegaard.

Fig. 266.—Blue and light green.

Fig. 267.—Dark grey, with white eyes.

Fig. 268. — Red, with red, black, and yellow design.

Melted glass mosaic beads, real size.

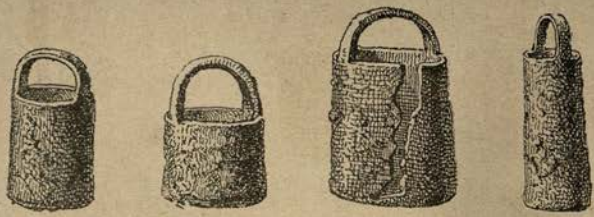


Fig. 269. Fig. 270. Fig. 271. Fig. 272.

Four of eleven iron ornaments, shaped like buckets. Real size.--Möllegaard.

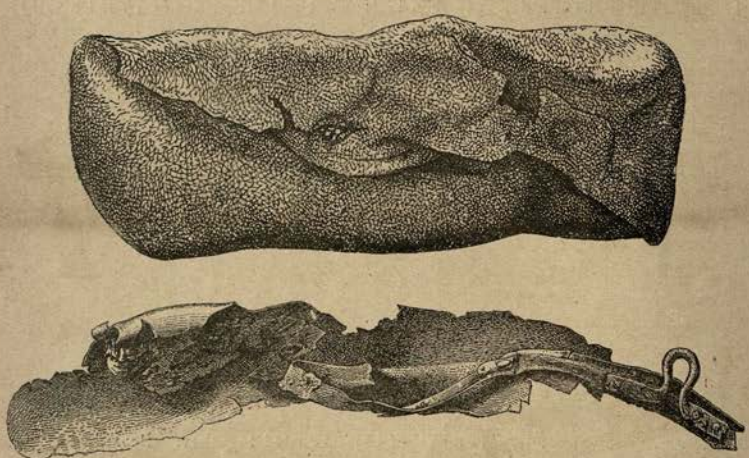


Fig. 273.—Bronze vessel, 9 inches in diameter, with handle fastened with rivets. It contained numerous articles taken from the pyre, but rust had united them all.

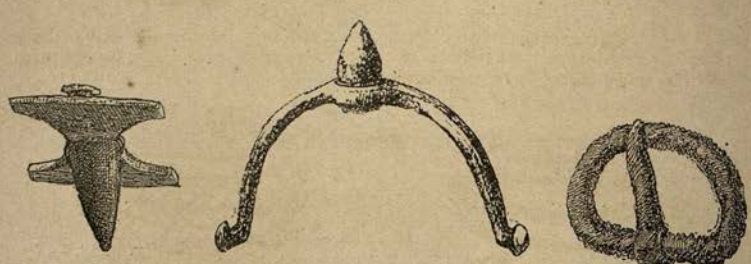


Fig. 274. Two iron spurs in burnt spot.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 275.

Fig. 276.—Iron buckle, $\frac{2}{3}$ real size.—Kannikegaard.

Fig. 277.

Fig. 278.

Two prismatic dice, real size, damaged by fire, the sides pointing towards each other always counting seven; found in an urn with burnt bones, remains of a glass cup, &c., one foot under the ground.—Kannikegaard.

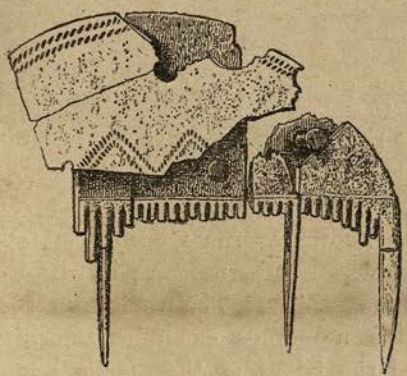


Fig. 279.

Fig. 280.

Fragments of bone comb and iron rivet, real size, found in a cinerary urn.—Broholm.

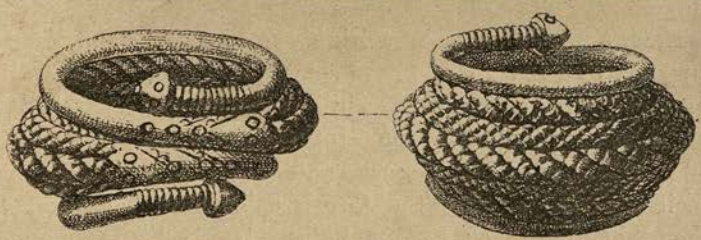


Fig. 281.—Spiral ring of massive gold, showing the two sides, found near a large bronze cauldron, and fragments of the mountings of a carriage, several iron swords, shield bosses, &c. Real size.—Broholm.

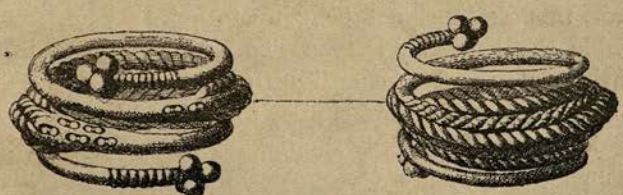


Fig. 282.—Spiral gold ring much alloyed with silver, showing the two sides. Real size.—Broholm.

CHAPTER XI.

RUNES.

Early knowledge of the art of writing—Knowledge of rune writing very remote—Archaic Greek characters—Jewels with earlier runes—Runes on memorial stones—Runic alphabets—The origin of runes—Their mystical meaning—Memorial runic stones—Runic staves—The Runatal—Archaic inscriptions compared with runes.

As the early form of writing known as runes occurs so frequently in connection with these Northern relics, it will be well to devote a chapter to the subject. The written records and finds in the North give numerous examples showing that at a very early period the tribes of the North knew the art of writing. The characters used were called "rúnir" runes.

The knowledge of rune writing was so remote, that it was supposed by the people to have come with Odin, thus showing its great antiquity and possibility of the theory that the runes were brought to the North by the people who had migrated from the south-east, and who may have obtained their knowledge from the Greek colonies situated on the shores of the Black Sea or Palus Mæotis. The numerous runic inscriptions, showing in many cases the archaic form of these characters, bear witness to the truth of the Northern records, though it cannot be denied that they often closely resemble the Etruscan letters. To corroborate these records a considerable number of antiquities, the forms of which are unknown in Italy and are similar to those of the North, have been found in Southern Russia, and may be seen in the museums of that country.

At what early date the art of writing runes became known in the North it is impossible to tell. From the Roman coins

found in the Nydam, Vimose, Thorsberg, &c. finds we know that the people knew the art at the period to which the coins belong, but this is far from proving to us that they had just learned the art of writing; people do not learn how to write first on objects of gold and silver; but, at any rate, we can fix a date as early as the second or third century of the Christian era. It must be admitted as surprising, if the Northern peoples were so advanced as to manufacture the beautiful weapons and artistic articles found in the graves and elsewhere, they had not also instituted a coinage of their own.

That the knowledge of runes did not come to the North before that of working iron is almost certain, as no runes have been found there on the objects belonging to the bronze age. A fact we must bear in mind is, that in the earlier graves of the iron age, many of which are of greater antiquity than the bog finds,[1] the objects were so thoroughly destroyed on the pyre, that all traces of runic character upon them would disappear.

Besides the runes found inscribed upon jewels, weapons,

[1] I can give an example that has lately come to my knowledge to prove this assertion. Professor Lorange found runes on parts of burnt bones found in a grave which he with Professor Stephens places, judging from the antiquities which belonged to it, as belonging to the sixth century.

"RUNE-INSCRIBED BURNT BONE.

"In a letter dated Feb. 27th, 1886, I received from my friend the gifted Norwegian old-lorist A. Lorange, Keeper of the Bergen Forn-hall, a facsimile drawing of a piece of burnt bone, shortly before found in a grave-urn from the early iron age at Jæderen. Afterwards he kindly sent the original to the Danish Museum, that I might give a faultless engraving. While there, the frail treasure was scientifically treated by Hr. Steffensen, the Conservator, and it is now quite hard and in excellent order. But even when it was taken from the urn, the runes were sharp and quite readable. These Old-Northern letters were elegantly cut, most of them in decorative writing, that is, with two or three strokes instead of one, very much in the style of the (? 7th century) Old-Danish Bone Amulet found at Lindholm in Scane, Sweden ('Old Northern Run. Mon.,' vol. i., p. 219; iii., p. 33; 4to Handbook, p. 24); and of the ashen Lance-shaft from the Danish Kragehul Moss, not later than the year 400 ('O. N. Run. Mon.,' vol. iii., p. 133; 4to Handbook, p. 90).

"This burnt bone is nearly 4 inches long; average width, ½ inch. It bears over forty rune-staves, cut in two lines, in the *Boustrophedon* order.

"From the rune-types and language I judged this piece to date from the 6th century. But as Hr. Lorange was familiar with the build and grave-gear of the tumuli of a similar class, I begged him to say whether—exclusively from his standpoint as archæologist—he agreed with me. He replied, *that he did.*

"If I have read the runes aright, this object also has been a heathen amulet. It is the first burnt bone yet found *risted with runes.* Other such we may have lost, for want of lynx-eyed examination.

"GEORGE STEPHENS,
"Cheapinghaven, Denmark.
"*November* 6, 1886."

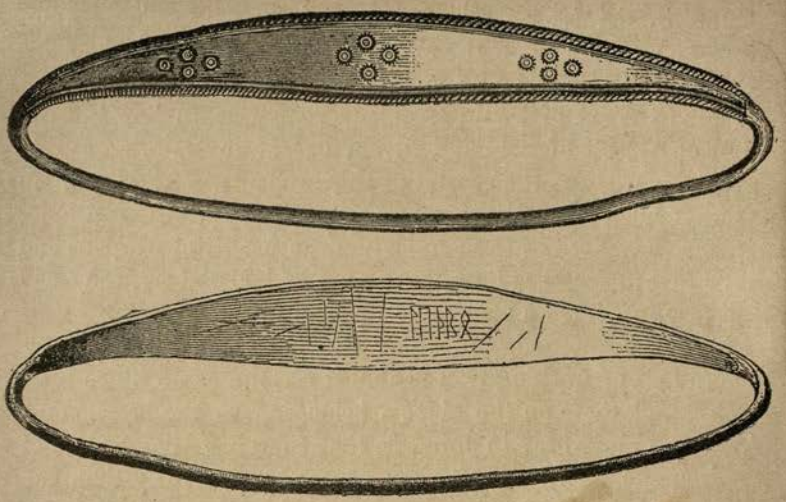


Fig. 283.—Diadem of gold, with earlier runes inside; found in oblong mound of sandy mould with remains of a stone coffin.—Jutland.

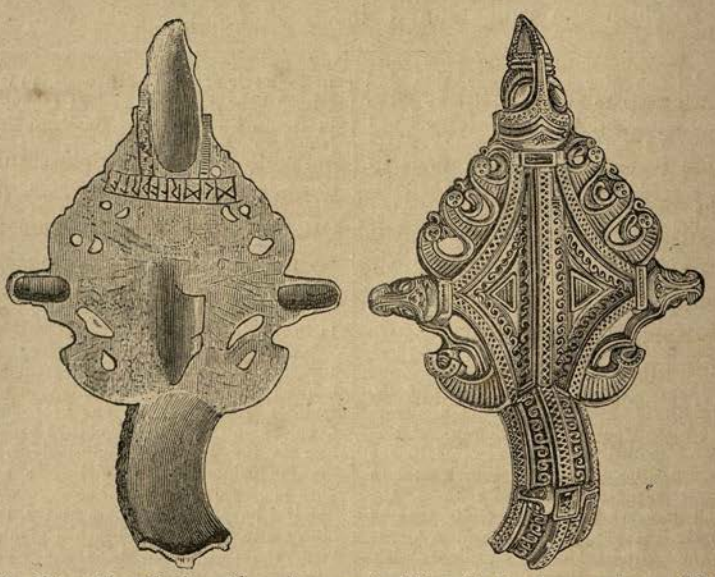
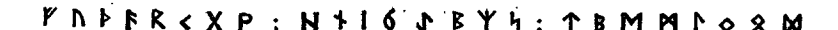


Fig. 284.—Silver fibula, with earlier runes,[1] richly gilt, the zigzag and runes filled with blue niello; ⅔ real size; earlier iron age.—Etelhem, Gotland.

[1] Similar runes also occurred on a scabbard found at Varpelev, and on a gold horn.

coins,[1] &c., there are others engraved on rocks and memorial stones, which are of very great antiquity, some of which seem to be earlier than the runes of the bog finds.

There are two alphabets; the earlier one numbered twenty-four, the later sixteen letters.



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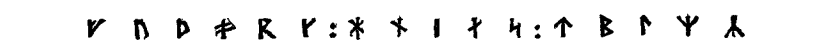
Earlier Runes from the Vadstena bracteate.



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Later Runes.

The Vadstena alphabet is divided into three sections, each containing eight letters or characters. The earlier runes were written from the right to the left; the later runic inscriptions are read from the left to the right. The later runes differ considerably from the earlier ones, from the gradual changes that took place, some falling out of use, till only sixteen existed in later times. Their signification also changed.

Were it not for the evidence of the finds having runic inscriptions of the fuller runic alphabet, it would have seemed more probable that the less developed one was the earlier; but in the face of the most indisputable proofs of the antiquity of the fuller alphabet, such assertions cannot be made. The only conclusion to which this leads us therefore is, that the runic alphabet must in the course of time have become simplified. There are runic inscriptions which contain both earlier and later runes, but the former at last gradually disappeared.

It seems that the custom of having alphabets on objects

[1] Danish coins with runic characters have been obtained from as early a period as that of Svein Úlfsson, or the 12th century. A runic *kefli*, according to its contents, carved soon after 1200, is preserved in the Danish museum. It was found in Vinje church, Upper Telemarken, of Norway. The inscription thereon signifies: *Sigurd Jarlson traced these Runes the Saturday after Botolf's mass, when he journeyed hither and would not be reconciled to Sverre, the slayer of his father and brother.* Sigurd was the son of the well-known Erling Skakke; he lost a battle against Sverre in 1200. As the latter died in 1202, it was between these two dates that the unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation occurred. (Stephens, p. 515.)

such as the Vadstena bracteate existed in Greece and Etruria.[1] The earliest graves in the Roman colonies in which there is writing are very few; what writing there is is never in the language of the people, but always in Latin; and nearly all, if not all such graves, are those of Christian people.

The art of writing shows the advanced civilisation of the

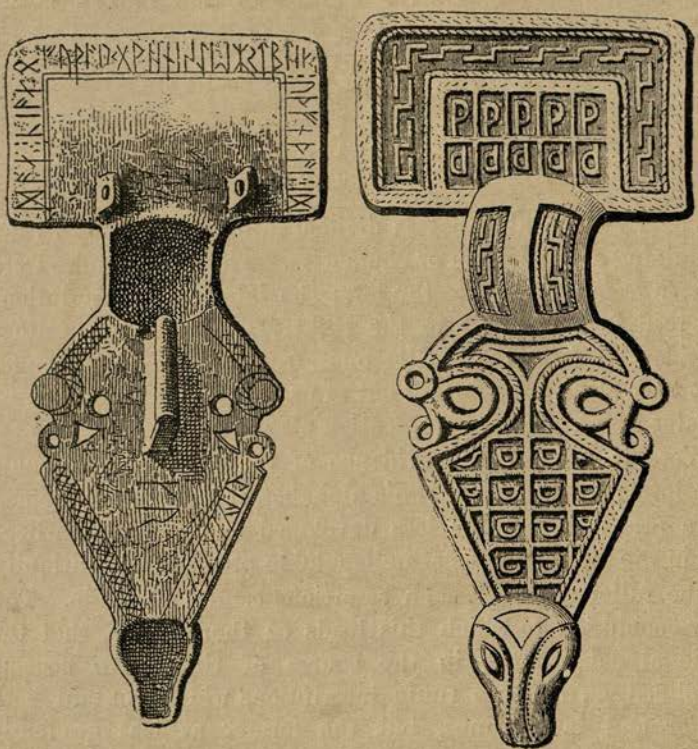


Fig. 285.—A fibula of silver, partly gilt, with same runic letters, with slight variations. Real size.—Charnay, Burgundy, France (of Norse origin).

people of the North compared with that of the other

[1] Dennis, p. 306. See Signor Gamurrini, who has described and illustrated them (see Ann. Inst. 1871, pp. 156–166). Franzius, in his 'Elementa Epigraphices Græcæ,' p. 22, 4to, Berolini, 1840, gives three Greek alphabets found inscribed in the same manner on various objects. No. 1, of twenty-four letters, is on the Agyllic vase first engraved by Lepsius ('Annal. Hist. Archæol. Rom.,' vol. viii., p. 186). The second is a fragment, only sixteen letters, found on the wall of an Etruscan sepulchre ('Lanzi Saggio di ling. Etr.,' ii., p. 436). The third is incomplete, having only the beginning, or the first fourteen letters.

countries mentioned. The language of Tacitus[1] is plain enough, and any other interpretation is not correct. The assertion made that the knowledge of writing came to the North through the present Germany is not borne out by the facts. Runic monuments do not occur south of the river Eider, either on detached stones or engraved on rocks. The few jewels found scattered here and there, either in France or Germany

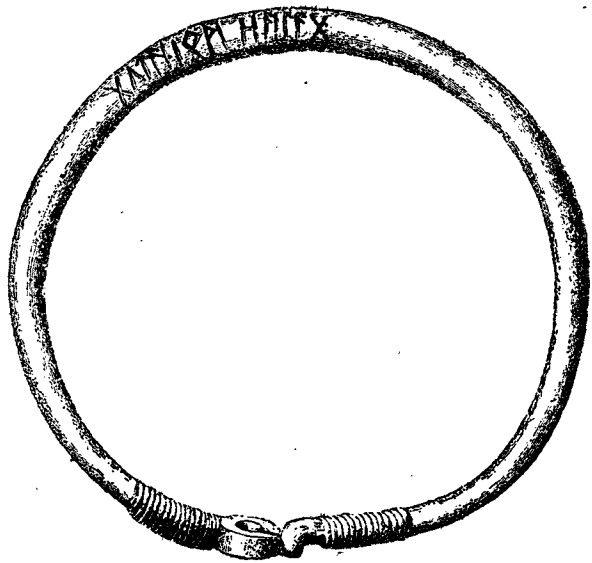


Fig. 286.—Neck-ring of gold, with runes; ½ real size; found (1838) in a round mound.—Wallachia.

are thoroughly Northern, and show that in these places the people of the North made warfare, as corroborated by the testimony of the Eddas and Sagas, as well as of Frankish and old English and other records.

Great indeed has been, and still is, the harvest of runic monuments or objects in the North. Every year several new objects with these characters are discovered in fields, bogs, and graves, or when old walls or buildings are demolished.

[1] Tacitus (Germ. c. 19) says: "*Litterarum secreta viri pariter ac feminæ ignorant*" (Men and women are equally ignorant of the secrets of letter writing). The earliest Latin inscriptions found in the North have characters unlike the runes.

England, being the earliest and most important of the Northern colonies, possesses many monuments and objects with runes; among them a large knife, now in the British Museum, found in the bed of the Thames, the blade of which is ornamented with gold and silver, and an inscription in runes.[1]

From the sagas we learn that runes were traced on staves, rods, weapons, the stem and rudder of ships, drinking-horns, fish bones, and upon the teeth of *Sleipnir*, &c.

In Runatal (Odin's Rune song), or the last part of Havamal, there is a most interesting account of the use that could be made of runes. It shows plainly that in earlier times they were not used by the people in general for writing; that they were mystic, being employed for conjurations and the like, and therefore regarded with a certain awe and superstition; just as to-day writing is looked upon by certain savage tribes, who cannot be made to understand how speech can be transmitted and kept on paper for an indefinite period.

In this song, Odin is supposed to be teaching some one, and giving advice; he reckons up his arts thus:—

I know that I hung
On the windy tree
Nine[2] whole nights,
Wounded with a spear,
Given to Odin,
Myself to myself;
On the tree
Of which no one knows
From what roots it comes.

They gave me no food
Nor a horn (drink);
I peered downward,
I caught the runes,
Learned them weeping;[3]
Thence I fell down.

Nine songs of might
I learnt from the famous
Son of Bölthorn, father of Bestla;[4]
And I got a draught
Of the precious mead,
Taken out of Odrerir.[5]

---

[1] In the Royal Library at Copenhagen there exist three most remarkable manuscripts in runic characters, showing the late period at which these still were in use. The first of these manuscripts, bearing the date of 1543, was written as a journal by Mogens Gyldenstjerne (a Danish noble) of Stjernholm, during a voyage into the North Sea undertaken by him in that year. The second bears the date of 1547, and is written as a note on a rough draft of a power of attorney by Bille of Bregentved, another Danish noble. The third is a notice about the last-mentioned estate, also containing a line in runic characters.

The Runic codex containing the Scanian law also contains, in a different hand, a list of Danish kings, and among these one Ambruthe as having been king in Jutland. The time of this codex can be approximately fixed at about the year 1300.

[2] The sacred or mystical number.

[3] We see that Odin had to go through a terrible ordeal to learn the runes.

[4] Bölthorn and Bestla are nowhere else mentioned in the earlier Edda.

[5] Song-rouser, one of the vessels holding the sacred mead.

Then I became fruitful
And wise;
I grew and I throve;
Word followed word
With me;
Act followed act
With me.

Thou wilt find runes
And letters to read,
Very large staves,
Very strong staves,
Which the mighty wise one drew,
And the high powers made,
And the Hropt of the gods (Odin) carved.

Odin (carved runes) among the Asar;[1]
Dain with the Alfar;
Dvalin with the Dvergar;
Alsvid (the All-wise)
With the Jötnar;
Some I carved myself.

Better 'tis not to invoke
Than sacrifice too much;
A gift always looks for reward;
Better not to send
Than offer too much;
Thus Thund[2] carved
Before the origin of men;
He rose there;
There he came back.

I know incantations,
Which no king's wife knows,
And no man's son.
Help is the first one called,
And it will help thee
Against strife and sorrows,
Against all kinds of grief.

A second I know,
Which the sons of men need,
Who would as leeches live.[3]

The third I know,
If I am in sore need of
Bonds for my foes;
I deaden the edges[4]
Of my foes;
Neither weapons nor wiles hurt for them.

The fourth I know,
If men lay
Bonds on my limbs;
I sing (incantations) so
That I can walk;
The fetter flies off my feet,
And the shackles off my hands.

The fifth I know,
If I see an arrow flying,
Shot to harm in the array;
It flies not so fast
That I cannot stay it
If I get sight of it.

The sixth I know,
If a man wounds me
With the roots of a young tree;[5]
Illness shall eat
The man
That lays spells on me,
Rather than me.

The seventh I know,
If I see a hall burning
Round the sitting men;
It burns not so broadly
That I cannot save them;
Such an incantation can I sing.

The eighth I know,
Which for every one is
Useful to learn;
Where hate arises
Among sons of kings
I can allay it soon.

---

[1] From this stanza we learn which tribes or people knew the art of writing runes.

[2] Thund = Odin.

[3] Three last lines of stanza are missing.

[4] The edges of weapons. Some persons were supposed to have the power to deaden weapons' edges.

[5] Spells on the roots of a young tree or sticks.

The ninth I know,
If I am in need
To save my ship afloat,
I hush the wind
On the waves,
And calm all the sea.

The tenth I know,
If I see hedge-riders[1]
Playing in the air,
I cause that
They go astray
Out of their skins,
Out of their minds.

The eleventh I know,
If I shall to battle
Lead my old friends,
I sing under the shields,
And they go with might
Safe to the fray,
Safe out of the fray,
Safe wherever they come from.

The twelfth I know,
If I see on a tree
A halter-corpse swinging;[2]
I carve so
And draw in runes,
That the man shall walk
And talk to me.

The thirteenth I know,
If I do on a young thegn[3]
Water sprinkle;
He will not fall
Though he go into battle;
That man sinks not by swords.

The fourteenth I know,
If I shall reckon up
The gods for the host of men;
Asar and Alfar[4]
I know all well;
Few unwise know so much.

The fifteenth I know,
That which Thjodreyrir[5] sang,
The Dverg, before the door of Delling;[6]
He sang strength to the Asar
And fame to the Alfar,
Wisdom to Hroptayr.[7]

The sixteenth I know,
If of the comely maiden
I want all the heart and the love,
I change the mind
Of the white-armed woman
And turn all her heart.

The seventeenth I know,
That the youthful maiden
Will late forsake me.
These songs
Wilt thou Loddfafnir[8]
Long have lacked,
Though they are good if thou takest them,
Useful if thou learnest them,
Profitable if thou takest them.

I know the eighteenth,
Which I will never tell
To maiden or man's wife,
Except to her alone
That holds me in her arms,
Or is my sister;
All is better
That one alone only knows.[9]
This is the end of the song.

---

[1] Witches and ghosts were believed to ride on hedges and tops of houses at night.
[2] Hanged corpse.
[3] Man.
[4] Here the Alfar are reckoned among the gods.
[5] The mighty rearer.
[6] Delling is the father of Day (Vafthrúdnismál, 25; Later Edda).
[7] Odin.
[8] Loddfafnir is some one whom Odin is teaching.
[9] One must not tell his secret to any one.

Now the song of Har is sung,
In the hall of Har;
Very useful to the sons of men,
Useless to the sons of Jötnar.[1]
Hail to him who sang!
Hail to him who knows!
May he who has learned profit by it!
Hail to those who have listened!

"Atli was a great, powerful, and wise king; he had many men with him, and took counsel with them how he should get the gold; he knew that Gunnar and Högni were owners of so much property[2] that no man had the like of it: he sent men to the brothers and invited them to a feast in order to give them many gifts; Vingi was the leader of the messengers. The queen knew of their secret talk, and suspected treachery against her brothers. She cut runes, took a gold ring, and tied on it a wolf's hair; she gave this to the king's messengers. They went as the king had told them, and before they landed Vingi saw the runes and changed them so that they meant that Gudrún wished them to come to Atli. They came to the hall of Gunnar and were well received; large fires were made before them; there they drank merrily the best drinks. Vingi said: 'King Atli sent me hither and wanted you to visit him to get honour and large gifts, helmets and shields, swords and coats-of-mail, gold and good clothes, warriors and horses and large estates, and he says he would rather let you than any others have his realm.' Then Gunnar turned his head and said to Högni: 'What shall we accept of this offer? He offers us a large realm, but I know no kings owning as much gold as we, for we own all the gold which lay on Gnitaheath, and large skemmas (rooms) filled with gold and the best cutting weapons and all kinds of war-clothes; I know my horse to be the best, my sword the keenest, my gold the most renowned.' Högni answered: 'I wonder at his offer, for this he has seldom done, and it is unadvisable to go to him. I am surprised that among the costly things which Atli sent to us I saw a wolf's hair tied on a gold ring, and it may be that Gudrún thinks he has a wolf's mind (mind of a foe) towards us, and that she wants us not to go.' Then Vingi showed him the runes which he said Gudrún had sent. The men now went to sleep, while they continued drinking with some others. Then Högni's wife, Kostbera, a most handsome woman, went to them and looked at the runes. She and Gunnar's wife, Glaumvör, a very accomplished woman, brought drink. The kings became very drunk. Vingi saw this, and said: 'I will not conceal that King Atli is very heavy in his movements, and too old to defend his realm,

[1] We see by this and many other passages that the Jötnar were the enemies of the Asar.

[2] Property here means gold.

and his sons are young and good for nothing; he wishes to give you power over the realm while they are so young, and he prefers you to enjoy it.' Now Gunnar was very drunk, and a great realm was offered to him, and he could not resist fate; he promised to go, and told it to his brother Högni, who answered: 'Your resolve must be carried out, and I will follow thee, but I am unwilling to go'" (Volsunga, c. 33).

Runes were occasionally used as charms in cases of illness.

Egil went on a journey to Vermaland to collect the tax from the Jarl Arnvid, who was suspected of having slain King Hakon the Good's men when they went thither for this purpose. On the way he came to the house of a bondi named Thorfinn.

"As Egil and Thorfinn sat and took their meal, Egil saw that a woman lay sick on the cross-bench, and asked who she was. Thorfinn answered that she was his daughter Helga. She had been long ill from a very wasting sickness; she could not sleep at night, and was like one *ham-stolen*[1] (crazy). 'Has anything been tried for her illness?' said Egil. Thorfinn said: 'Runes have been traced by the son of a bondi in the neighbourhood, but she is far more ill since than she was before; canst thou do anything for such an illness?' Egil answered: 'It may be that it will not be worse though I take charge of it.' When he had done eating he went to where she lay and spoke to her. He bad that she be taken out of bed and clean clothes put under her, which was done. Then he examined the bed, and there found a piece of whalebone with runes on it. He read them, cut them off, and scraped the chips into the fire; he burned the whalebone and had her clothes carried into the open air. Then Egil sang:—

As man shall not trace runes
Except he can read them well,
It is thus with many a man
That the dark letters bewilder
him.

I saw on the cut whalebone
Ten hidden[2] letters carved,
That have caused to the leek-linden
(woman)
A very long sorrow.

"Egil traced runes, and placed them under the pillow in the bed where she rested. It seemed to her as if she awoke from a sleep, and she said she was then healed, though she

[1] Of witches = shape-stolen.

[2] Undecipherable.

had little strength. Her father and mother were very glad" (Egil's Saga, c. 75).

When persons were deaf, they communicated with others by means of runes.

"Thorkel told his sister Orny that the steersman had come to his house, saying: 'I wish, kinswoman, that thou shouldst serve[1] him during the winter, for most other men have enough to do.' Orny carved runes on a wood-stick, for she could not speak, and Thorkel took it and read. The wood-stick told this: 'I do not like to undertake to serve the steersman, for my mind tells me that, if I do, much evil will come of it.' He became angry because his sister declined, so that when she saw it she consented to serve Ivar, and continued to do so during the winter" (Thorstein Uxafót, Fornmanna Sögur, 110).

Runes traced on sticks (*kefli*), which were sometimes used, did not offer proper security against falsification, unless personal runes were used, which however were known only to a very limited number.

An Icelandic settler named Gris, who had gone on a journey to Norway, was going back to Iceland from Nidaros (Throndhjem).

"A woman came to him with two children, and asked him to take them with him. He asked: 'What have they to do there?' She said that their uncle Thorstein Svörf lived in the district where Gris had a bœr, and that her name was Thorarna. Gris said: 'I will not do that without some evidence.' Then she gave him from under her cloak a stick on which were many words known to Thorstein. Gris said: 'Thou wilt think me greedy for property.' She asked: 'Ask as much as thou wilt?' He answered: 'Four hundreds in very good silver, and thou must follow with the children.' 'It is not possible for me to follow them,' she said, 'but I will pay what thou askest.' She told him the name of the boy Klaufi, and of the girl Sigrid. Gris added: 'How hast thou become so wretched, thou who art of such good kin?' She replied: 'I was taken in war by Snækoll Ljotsson, who is the father of these children; after which he drove me away against my will.'

"Gris had a favourable wind after he had taken these children

[1] Take care of his clothes, &c.

on board, and sailed to Iceland into the same river-mouth as usual; and as soon as he had landed he carried away both children, so that no one knew of his coming. That evening he went to Thorstein at Grund, who received him very well, mostly because his son Karl had gone abroad at the time that Gris had been abroad, and Thorstein wanted to ask about his journey. Gris spoke little. Thorstein inquired if he was ill. Gris answered that it was rather that he was not well pleased with his doings; 'for I have brought hither two children of thy sister.' 'How can that be?' said Thorstein, 'And I will not acknowledge their relationship unattested.' Then Gris showed him the stick, and he recognized his words thereon, though it was long since he spoke them. He acknowledged the children, but paid Gris to bring up Klaufi" (Svarfdæla, c. 11).

"Klaufi and Gris sailed from Solskel southward along the Norwegian coast, until they came to an islet, where lay two ships with no men on them. They jumped on board one of the ships, and Klaufi said: 'Tell thou, Gris, who has steered these ships, for here are runes, which tell it.' Gris said he did not know. Klaufi answered: 'Thou knowest, and must tell.' Gris was obliged to do so, against his will, and thus read the runes: 'Karl steered the ship when the runes were carved'" (Svarfdæla, c. 14).

"One summer in the time of King Harald Hardradi it happened, as was often the case, that an Icelandic ship came to Nidaros (Throndhjem). On this ship there was a poor man who kept watch during the night. While all slept he saw two men go secretly up to Gaularas with digging tools and begin to dig; he saw they searched for property, and when he came on them unawares he saw that they had dug up a chest filled with property. He said to the one who seemed to be the leader that he wanted three marks for keeping quiet, and some more if he should wish it. Thorfinn assented to this, and weighed out to him three marks; when they opened the chest a large ring and a thick necklace of gold lay uppermost. The Icelander saw runes carved on the chest; these said that Hakon Jarl had been the owner of this property" (Fornmanna Sögur, vi. 271).

One day Thurid, the old foster-mother of Thorbjörn Öngul, an enemy of Grettir, asked to be taken down to the sea.

"When she came there, she found the stump of a tree with the roots on, as large as a man could carry. She looked at

the stump, and had it turned round. On one side it looked as if it had been burned and rubbed. On this side she had a small spot smoothed with a knife. Then she took her knife and carved runes on it, and reddened it with her blood, singing words of witchcraft over it. She walked backwards around the stump, in the opposite direction to the sun's course, and pronounced many powerful incantations thereover. Then she had it pushed out into the sea, and said it should be driven

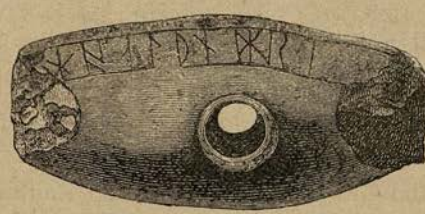


Fig. 287.—Stone axe with earlier runes; $\frac{2}{3}$ real size.—Upland.

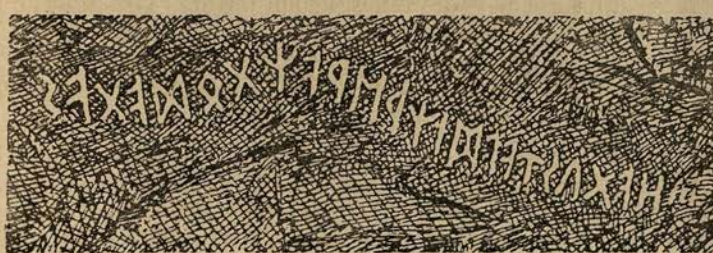


Fig. 288.—Earlier runic inscription discovered (1872) on a perpendicular bluff 20 feet high and about 200 feet from the shore, at Valsfjord, Fosen, North Throndhjem. The runes are carved in a perpendicular line from the bottom up. Hardly anything is left of the letters. The Runes; $\frac{1}{15}$ real size.

out to Drangey, and cause great mischief to Grettir. When Grettir was cutting the stump for firewood with an axe, he wounded himself severely above the knee"[1] (Gretti's Saga, c. 81).

The deeds of warriors were recorded on runic staves:—

Örvar-Odd, when very old, desired to revisit the scenes of his childhood, where a Völva had foretold him that his death would be caused by the head of the horse Faxi, at his birthplace, Hrafnista. When he arrived there he walked around on

[1] Cf. also Gretti's Saga, c. 62.

the farm, and his foot struck the skull of a horse, and a viper came out of it and bit him in the leg.

"He suffered so much from this wound that they had to lead him down to the shore. When he got there he said: 'Now you must go and hew a stone coffin for me, while some shall sit at my side and carve that song which I will compose

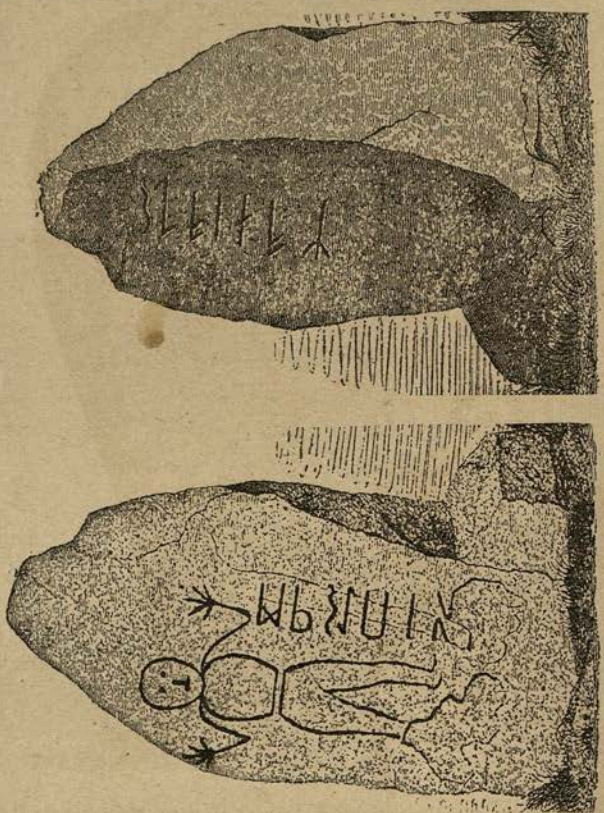


Fig. 289.—Stone, with earlier runes, height over 6 feet.—Krogstad, Upland.

about my deeds and life.' Then he began making the song,[1] and they carved it on a tablet,[2] and the nearer the poem drew to its end, the more the life of Odd ebbed away" (Orvar Odd's Saga; Fornaldar Sögur, p. 558).

[1] Kvædi, a poem or song. The poem consists of seventy-one stanzas with eight verses each, and the manuscripts are late and corrupted. It is evidently made up from the lives of several warriors, and often exaggerated, e.g., that he lived 300 years, and that his height was 16 or 24 feet.

[2] Speldi = tablet, flat piece of wood.

"The two brothers Jokul and Thorstein were to meet Finnbogi for a Holmganga.[1] As he did not come, they took a post from the latter's farm; Jokul carved a man's head

Fig. 290.—Earlier runes on granite block. About 10 feet high, 4 feet 11 inches at widest part, and 9 inches thick.—Tanum, Bohuslän, Sweden.

at one end, and traced in runes an account of what had occurred that day" (Vatnsdæla, 34).

The inscriptions of the earlier runes, the translation of which must be received with extreme caution, are short, while those of a later period are much longer.

[1] A form of duelling.

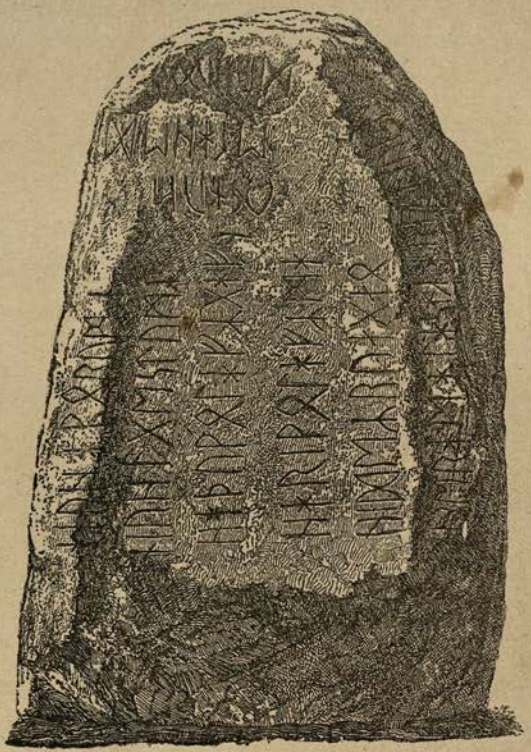


Fig. 291.—Runic stone, showing transition between earlier and later runes, about 4½ feet above ground; breadth, 2 feet 4 inches.—Stentofte, Blekinge, Sweden.

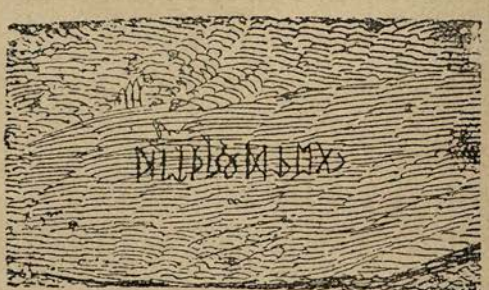


Fig. 292.—Part of stone block, with earlier runes.—Torvik, Norway. Eight feet 10 inches in length by 2 feet 2 inches wide, with a thickness of from 2⅓ to 3⅛ feet.

Fig. 293.—Red quartz stone, with earlier runes and warrior on horseback. Height, 8 feet 3 inches, but only 6 feet above ground; greatest breadth, 5 feet.—Hagby, Upland.

Fig. 294.—Granite slab of a stone coffin in a grave-mound, forming one of the sides. $\frac{1}{12}$ real size.—Torvik, Hardanger, Norway.

Fig. 295.—Runic stone, earlier runes. Length, 7 feet 2 inches; width, 2 feet 4 inches.—Berga, Södermanland, Sweden.[1]

[1] Professor Stephens in 'Handbook of Old Northern Runic Monuments,' says: "The only Northern stone known to me which bears two words, cut far apart and running in different directions. I would therefore suggest that the one name is carved later than the other. Perhaps the husband or wife died first, and shortly after the partner was called away; thus they most likely lay in the same grave, and were remembered on the same block."

Fig. 296.—Runic stone, earlier runes. Height, over 13 feet; greatest width, a little over 3 feet; with letters about 6 inches long; near a dom ring.—Björktorp, Blekinge, Sweden. See p. 314 for grave.

Fig. 297.—Earlier runic stone; about 7 feet 7 inches long, and at its broadest part 3 feet 6 inches.—Norway.

Fig. 298.—Granite block with earlier and later runes (the earlier runes in the centre). Height, 5 feet 3 inches; greatest breadth, 3 feet; average thickness, 1 foot.—Skå-äng, Södermanland, Sweden.

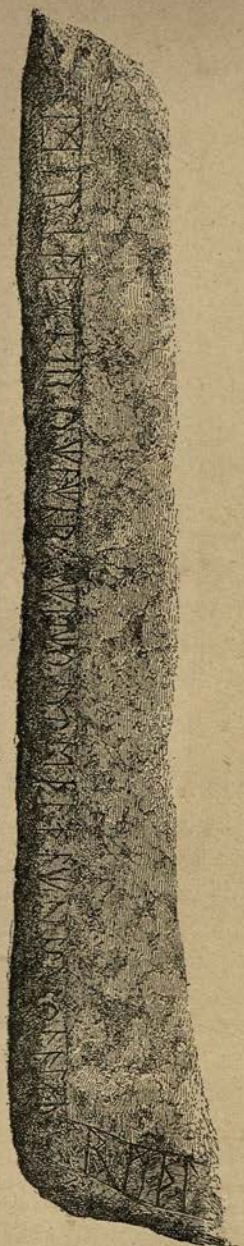


Fig. 299.—Earlier runic stone, Sigdal, Norway.

Fig. 300.—Earlier runic stone discovered in 1880, in a ruined grave-mound which contained a slab stone chest; one of the side slabs bore runes, and is given here. It has probably stood on another mound before it was put to this use.—Bergen Museum, Torvik, Hardanger, Norway.

Fig. 301.—Tune stone (with earlier runes) of red granite; found in a graveyard wall surrounding the church of Tune, near Moss, entrance of Christiania fjord. Height, 6 feet 7 inches; greatest width, 2 feet 4 inches.

Fig. 302.—Earlier runic inscription on a bluff, 11 feet above high-water mark.—Væblungsnæs, Romsdal, Norway.

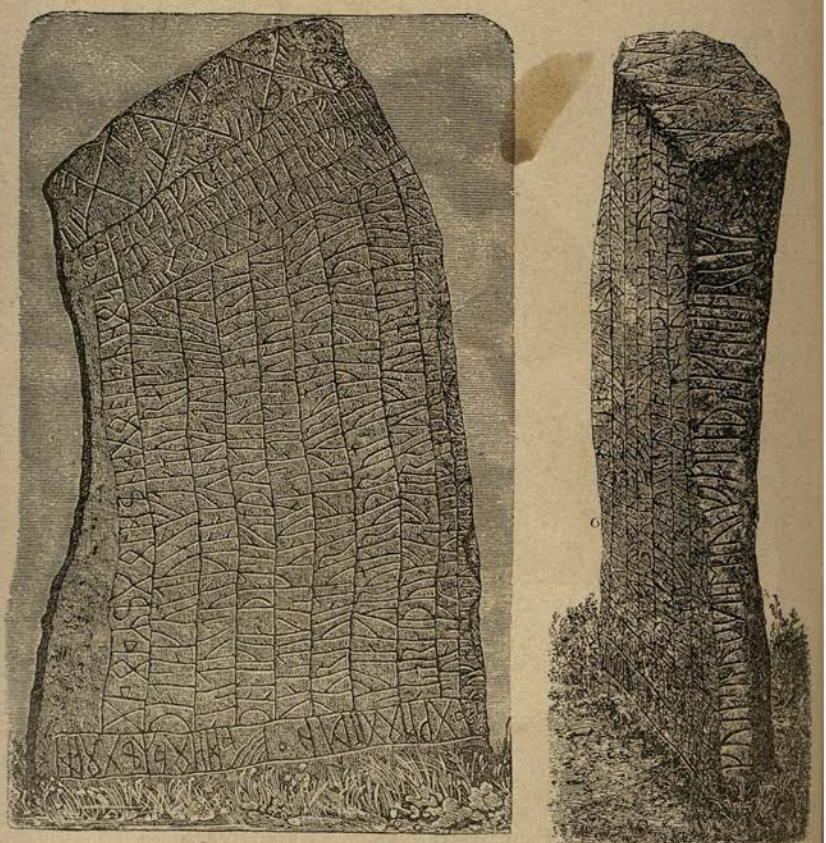


Fig. 303.—Runic stone, having the longest runic inscription known, composed of over 760 letters. Height, 12 feet; width, 6 feet.—In the Churchyard of Rök, Ostergötland, Sweden.

Not only do the finds prove to us how extensive were the voyages and journeys of the vikings, but many of the runic stones add their testimony to these and the sagas, often mentioning journeys in distant lands both for peaceful and warlike purposes. There are four runic stones extant on which Knut the Great is mentioned as "Knut who went to England"; the

Fig. 304.—Marble lion, with later runic inscription. Height, 10 feet. Now at Venice, whither it was brought from the Piræus in 1687.[1]

Thingamenn or *Thingamannalid* is mentioned on at least two runic stones.

[1] Bugge, by comparing the runic inscription on the Piræus marble lion now at Venice, comes to the conclusion that, while the damaged state of the inscription makes it impossible to decipher it as a whole, enough can, however, be read to show its approximate date, and also the home of the tracer. The snake-slings and runes on this lion in all probability are traced by a man from Sweden, who has been among the Værings or Varangians.

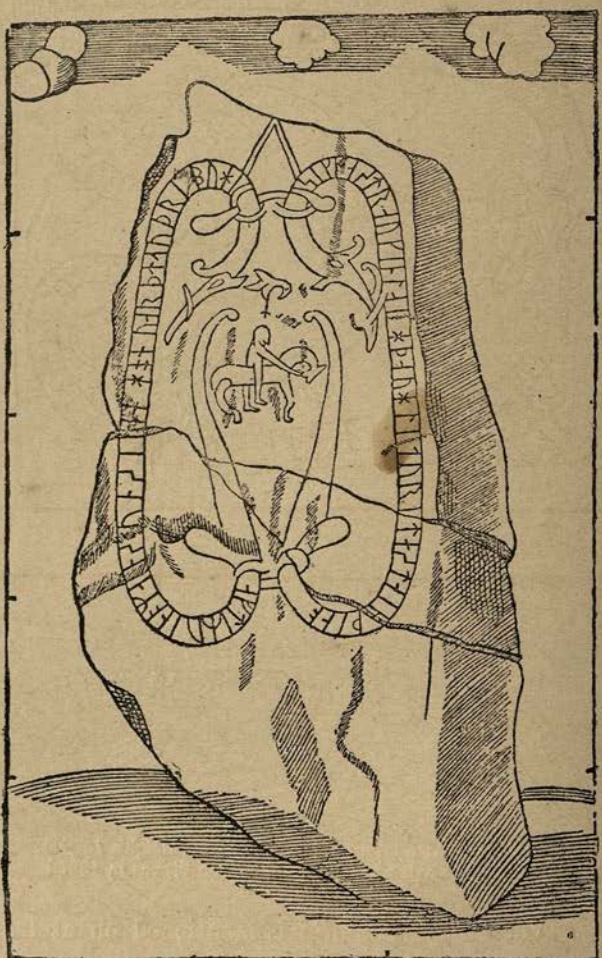


Fig. 305.—Later runic stone, with animal and bird.—Upland.

Fig. 306.—Later runic stone, with animals, possibly a representation of Fylgja at Svartsjö Castle, Lake Mälaren, Sweden.

Fig. 307.—Later runic stone, with birds.—Upland.

Fig. 308.—Stone with later runes. Height above ground, 10 feet; the width over 5 feet.—Nysätra parish, Upland.

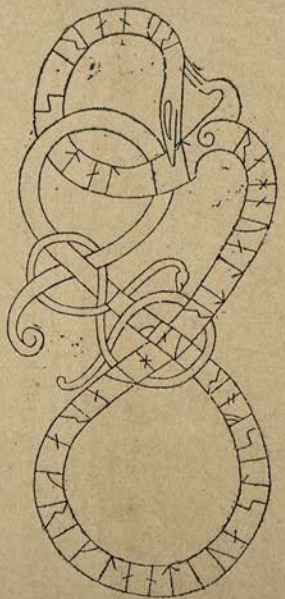


Fig. 309.—Later runic stone, Edssocken, Upland. "Runa rista lit Rahnualtr huar a Kriklanti uas lisforunki."

Fig. 310.—Later runic stone, 7½ feet above the ground. "Sterkar and Hiorvardr erected this stone to their father, Geiri, who dwelt west, in Thikalid (Thingmannalid). God help his soul."—Kålstad, Upland.

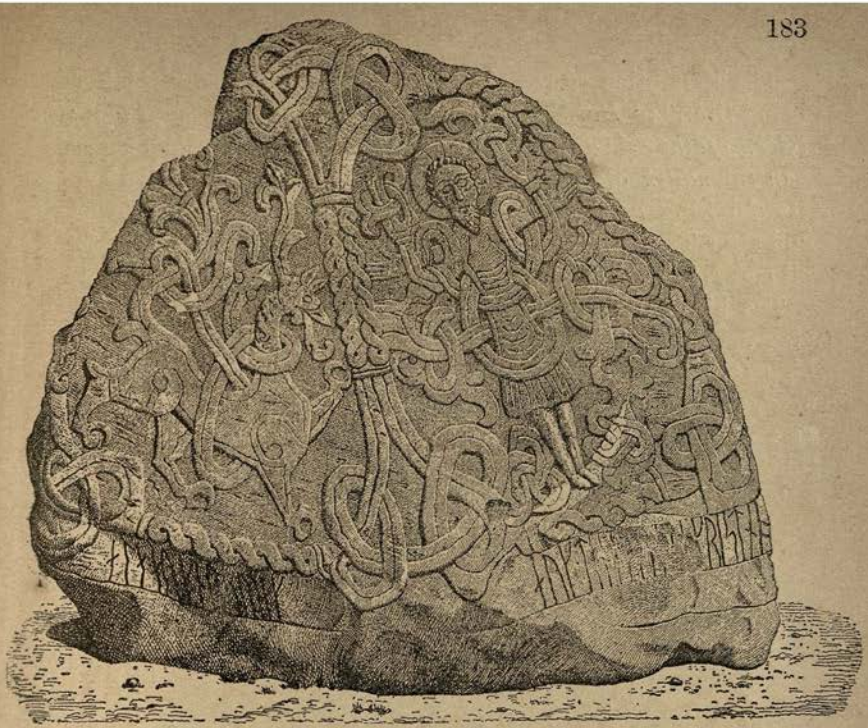


Fig. 311.—King Gorm's stone, with later runes.—Jellinge, Jutland. Front view.

Fig. 312.—Back view of King Gorm's stone.

The inscription on the above stone runs thus, the translation being literal: "*Haraltr kunukr bath kaurua kubl thausi aft kurm (Gorm) fathur sin auk aft thœurui muthur sina, sa haraltr ias sær uan tanmaurk ala auk nuruiak auk tana . . . . t kristnæ*" = Harald king bade make mounds these after Gorm, father his and after Thyra, mother his, that Harald who swore, Denmark all and Norway and Dane . . . . to christianize.

The historical mounds of King Gorm and his queen Thyra are respectively 200 and 230 feet in diameter, and about 40 feet high (see p. 183); the burial chamber of King Gorm was of wood, 22 feet long, 4½ feet high, 8 feet wide. In the grave were found a small silver cup, a bronze cross covered with gold, a wooden figure representing a warrior in armour, several metal mountings, &c.

Fig. 313.—Wooden shield with later runes.—Norway.

Fig. 314.—Runic stone in shipform grave, Upland. In the grave was found a helmet, apparently made of iron-plate, with ornaments of bronze in imitation of eyebrows; also a helmet-crest. On the helmet were numerous representations of horsemen with spears and carrying shields on their left arms, in front of the horses a snake, and in front of and behind each horseman a bird flying.

Fig. 315.—Baptismal stone font.—Langhem Church, Sweden

Fig. 316.—Baptismal stone with runes and a representation of Gunnar in the snake-pit, used as font in a church, Bohuslän. No Christian symbol is marked upon it.

Fig. 317.

Fig. 318.

Fig. 319.

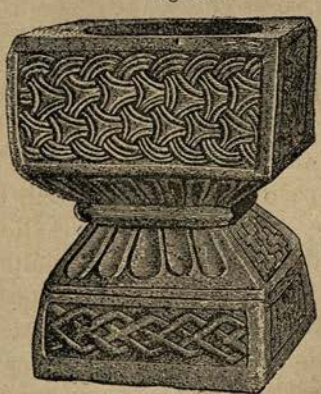


Fig. 320.

Baptismal fonts with runic inscriptions, some apparently heathen.

Two rock-tracings found at Ramsund and Gœk, on the southern shores of Lake Mälar, province of Södermanland, Sweden, show how deeply preserved in the memory of the people all over the North is the history of the Volsungar as told in the earlier Edda, and the Saga of that name. To the late Professor Carl Säve we are indebted for the discovery of these two mementos of the past. I here give the representation of the finer of the two, which is engraved on granite.

The scene is surrounded below by sculpture, and covered with runes above are two serpents twisted together, one without runes. Below the large snake Sigurd on his knee pierce

Fig. 321.—Tracing of later runes illustrating the Eddaic songs and Volsunga saga. Length, 16 feet; width, from 4 to 5 feet.—Ramsund Rock, Södermanland, Sweden.

with his sword the body of the reptile. In the midst between the snake the horse Grani is standing, made fast to a tree where two birds are seen. On the left Sigurd, seated, roasts on the fire, at the end of a stick, the heart of Fafnir. Round the fire are deposited pincers, an anvil, bellows, and hammer; the head of the smith (blacksmith) Regin is seen separated from the trunk. Then above is sculptured an animal, which looks like a fox—no doubt the otter—for the murder of which was given, as ransom, the rich treasure so fatal to Fafnir and to all those who possessed it after him. The runic inscription has not the slightest connection with the scene, not even with Sigurd Fafnisbani. As Mr. Säve remarks, Sigurd or Holmger,

and perhaps both, believed that they were descended from Sigurd Fafnisbani, the famous hero of the Volsunga.

The tracing on the stone of Gœk, not far from the city of Strengenæs, is about half the length of that on the Ramsund stone, but of the same width, and is not as fine. The subject is treated in a somewhat similar manner: the hammer is on the ground, while on the Ramsund stone it is in the man's hand. Above the horse Grani is a Christian cross.

The runic inscription, here also upon a snake, surrounds the figures, but has nothing to say about Sigurd Fafnisbani.

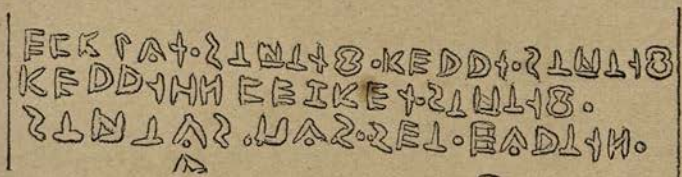


Fig. 322.—Oscan inscription (first three lines) on a bronze tablet in British Museum.

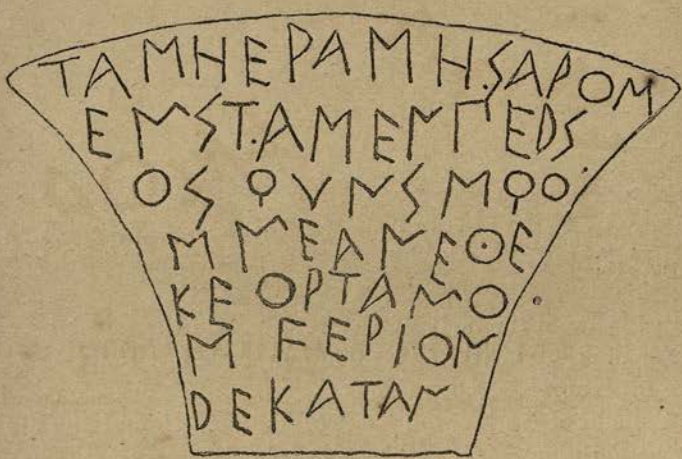


Fig. 323.—Greek inscription on bronze axe from Calabria, in the British Museum.

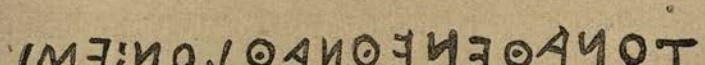


Fig. 324.—Archaic Greek inscription in the British Museum.

From the facsimile illustrations given of Etruscan, Greek and earliest Roman inscriptions chosen at random from the

museums, the reader will be able to judge for himself, and probably see how much more closely the earlier runes resemble the Greek archaic and Etruscan inscriptions than the Latin ones.

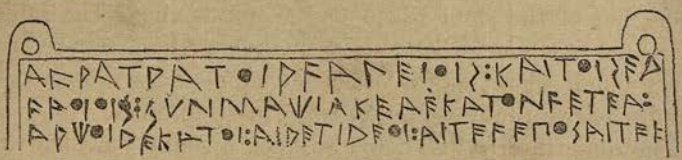
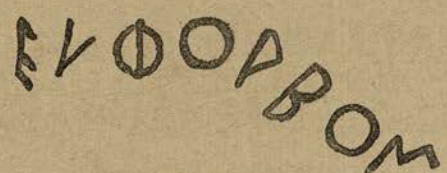
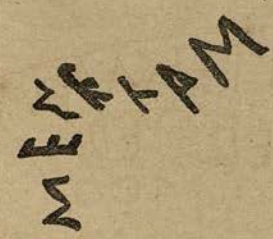


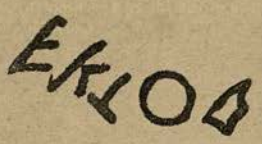
Fig. 325.—Bronze tablet, first three lines. Treaty between the Eleans and Heræans of Arcadia; copied from "Ancient Greek Inscriptions" in the British Museum.



(Euphorbos.)



(Menelaos.)



(Hector.)

Fig. 326.—These three archaic inscriptions are found on a vase from Camirus in Rhodes, now in the British Museum.

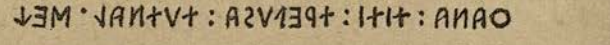


Fig. 327.—Etruscan inscription on a sepulchral urn in the British Museum.

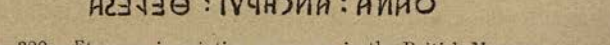


Fig. 328.—Etruscan inscription on an urn in the British Museum.

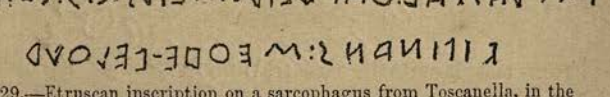


Fig. 329.—Etruscan inscription on a sarcophagus from Toscanella, in the British Museum.

Fig. 330.—Plaque of terra-cotta, representing Poseidon, painted. Found near Corinth. Now in the Louvre.

Fig. 331.—Latin inscription.

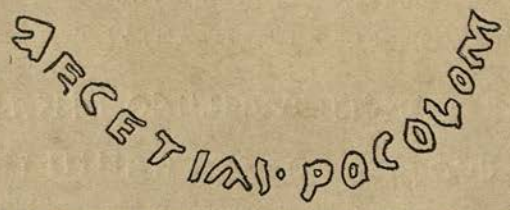


Fig. 332.—Early Latin inscription: painted on a vase in British Museum.

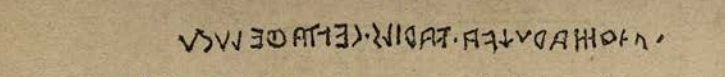


Fig. 333.—Etruscan inscription, on a sarcophagus from Toscanella, in the British Museum.

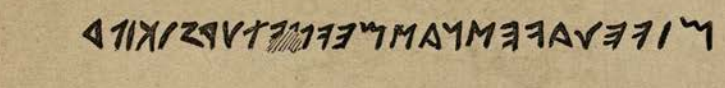


Fig. 334.—On an Etruscan sepulchral monument in terra-cotta, British Museum.

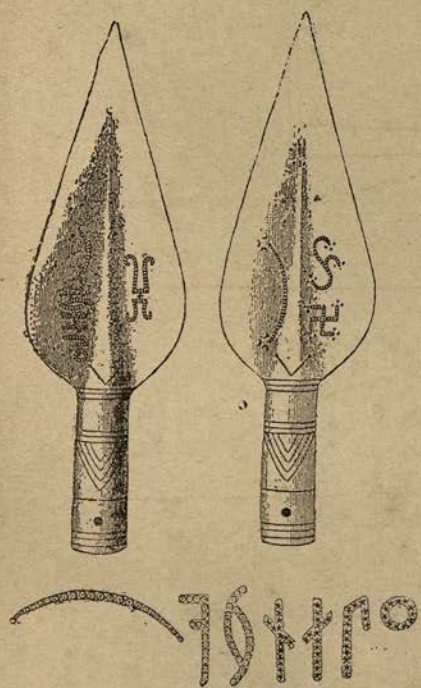


Fig 335.—Bronze spear-point, with earlier runes, and svastica and triskele stamped on it. Length 16½ inches.—Venice, island of Torcello. ½ real size.

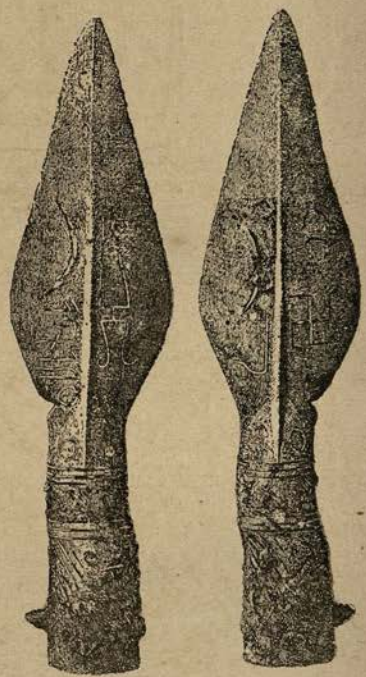


Fig. 336.—Iron spear-point, with runes and figures inlaid with silver, discovered in a mound with burnt bones and weapons.—Müncheberg, Mark-Brandenburg. ½ real size.

Fig. 337.—Iron spear-point, with runes and figures inlaid with silver.—Volhynia, Russia. ½ real size.

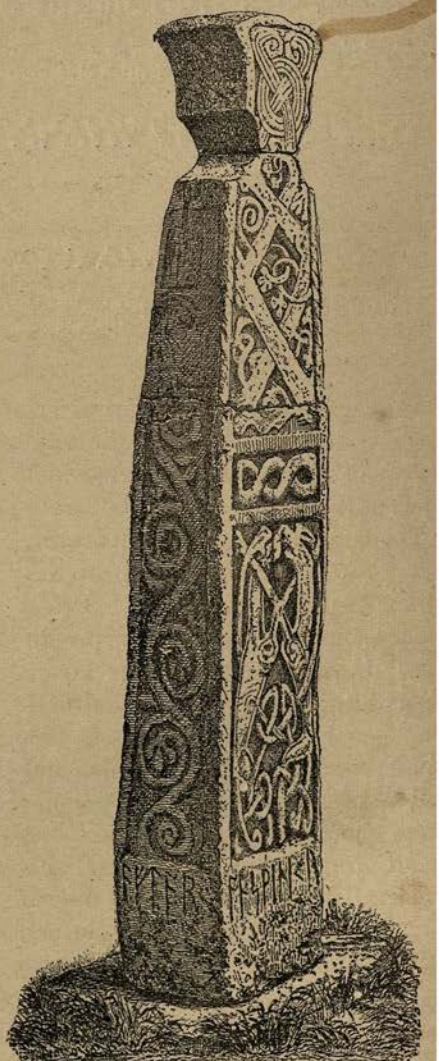


Fig. 338.—Runic stone found at Collingham, Yorkshire.

CHAPTER XII.

NORTHERN RELICS—BOG FINDS.

Numerous Greek and Roman objects—Intentional destruction of weapons—Thorsberg find—Coats of mail—Garments and harness—Weapons and ornaments—The Vimose find—The sax—Bronze and iron spurs—Carpenter's plane—The Kragehul find—The Nydam find—Discovery of a large oak boat—Its construction—Various weapons, tools, and ornaments—Damascened swords.

BEFORE passing on to other parts of our wide subject, let us examine somewhat more minutely and in detail the various classes of remarkable objects which have been found in the lands of the old Norsemen, belonging to the earlier iron age.

The bog finds[1] are very important, and throw additional light on the earlier history of the people. From them we are able to see how people were dressed, and to learn about their riding equipment, agricultural implements, cooking utensils, household vessels, waggons, tools, and offensive and defensive weapons; from one of these also we were first made acquainted with their sea-vessels. Many of the objects appear to be of Greek or Roman origin, and Roman coins are found, so that we can approximate closely the date when the objects were in use, and consequently the taste and manner of living of the period.

Fig. 339.—Shield boss of bronze with Latin inscription AELAELIANVS. ⅓ real size.—Thorsbjerg find.

[1] Bog finds belonging to the bronze age, as well as to the iron age, have been discovered in many places in the North. Those of the bronze age consist chiefly of swords, lance-heads, axes, sickles, &c. Objects of the bronze age are also found deposited under stones or in fields.

We can dress a warrior from head to foot, and wonder at his costly and magnificent equipment, and his superb and well-finished weapons, and can realise how magnificent must have been some of his riding and driving vehicles.

All these antiquarian bog-finds are within very easy access of the sea, varying in depth beneath the surface of the earth—in the Thorsbjerg bog, 10–14 feet; in the Nydam, 5–7 feet;

Fig. 340.—Bronze breast-plate, covered with gold and silver.—Thorsbjerg find.

the Vimose, 4–5 feet. Those of Denmark have proved far richer than those of the present Sweden, Norway, and the countries situated on the eastern and southern shores of the Baltic. In numerous instances the objects are unique, and many present a great similarity to those found in the skeleton graves, such as swords with Roman characters upon them, fragments of wooden buckets, checkers, dice, &c.

Here also, as in the graves where the bodies were burnt, we find objects intentionally damaged. This bending, twisting, and hacking of weapons seems to have been a religious custom. The spear-handles, scabbards, bows, arrow-shafts, and shields are often broken into fragments, or rolled together in inextricable knots. Ringed coats of mail and garments are torn to pieces, which afterwards were wrapped carefully together;

Fig. 341.—Fragments of silver shield boss, with gilt ornaments.—Thorsbjerg find.

Fig. 342.—Silver helmet.—Thorsbjerg find.

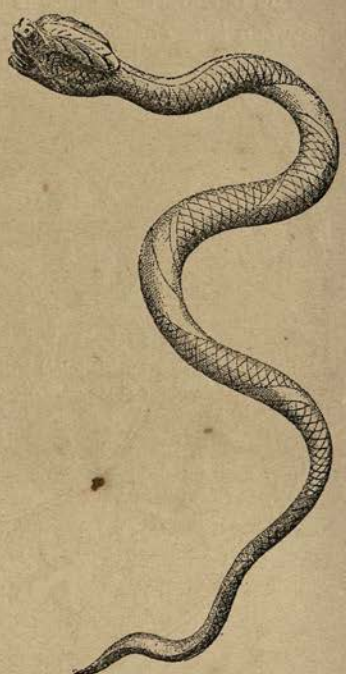


Fig. 343.—Bronze serpent: probably ornament to helmet.—Thorsbjerg find.

and the skulls and skeletons of horses are cleft in many places.

These masses of objects seem to imply that they were either the spoils and remains of great fights between different chieftains, or offers to the gods thrown into sacred springs. In this latter case the finds must be the produce of a long series of years, and have been given to the gods at different times,

the destruction, instead of taking place on the pyre, having taken place on the water.

This destruction was not apparently peculiar to the inhabitants of the North, for Cæsar relates of the Gauls, that when they went into battle they made a vow to consecrate the booty to the god of war. After the victory the captured animals were sacrificed, and the rest of the booty was brought together into one spot.

The narrative of Orosius offers the most striking similarity between this custom and that of the Cimbrians and Teutons,

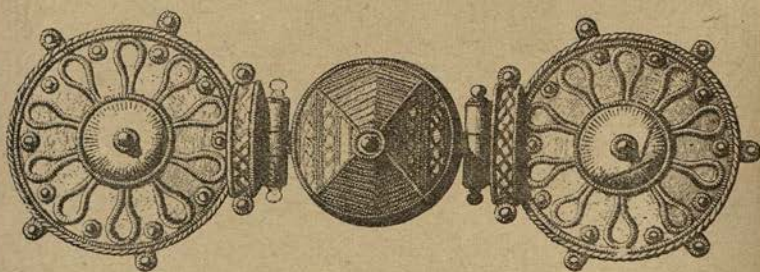
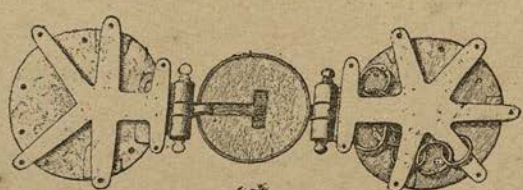


Fig. 344.—Bronze buckle inlaid with gold and silver, for ring armour; the back shows how the rings were attached. ⅔ real size.—Thorsbjerg Bog-find.



Reverse.

who, when coming from the North after their victory over the Romans at Arausia (near the river Rhone), in the year 105 before Christ, sacrificed the whole of the booty. He relates:—

"When the enemies had taken possession of two camps and an immense booty, they destroyed under new and strange imprecations all that had fallen into their hands. The clothes were torn and thrown away, gold and silver thrown into the river, the ring armour of the men cut to pieces, the accoutrements of the horses destroyed, the horses themselves thrown into the water, and the men with ropes around their necks

Fig. 345.—Bronze plate, covered with gold and silver, belonging to ring armour.—Thorsbjerg find.

Fig. 346.

Fig. 347.

Fig. 348.

Fig. 349.

Figures, made of thin silver plates, belonging to bronze plate.

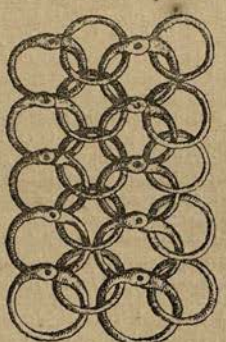


Fig. 350.—Fragment of ring armour. Real size.

suspended to the trees, so that there was no more booty for the victors than there was mercy for the conquered."

One might suppose that Orosius has here described the feast of victory at Nydam or Thorsbjerg.

If any proofs were needed to show that the objects were intentionally placed in the water, we have them in the fact that several clay vessels have been sunk by heavy stones being put in them, and that other objects were fastened to the bottom by means of large wooden hooks. Finally, we ought to add, the space within which the antiquities were found was in several places marked off by fence-like wicker hurdles of twigs, or by poles, spears or swords, stuck into the mud.

The *Thorsbjerg*[1] *Bog-find.*—The researches in this find cover a period of six years, from 1856 to 1862, and is one of the most remarkable, for here were brought to light objects unknown in other similar finds. From the coins[2] enumerated below, we

[1] Thorsbjerg is situated south of Flensborg, in Southern Jutland. Among the objects found were fragments of swords, all double-edged, the hilts of all, with one exception, of wood, inlaid with bronze and silver, with scabbards of wood with metal mountings (on the metal bottom-piece of one scabbard is a very clear runic inscription); a sword-belt of thick leather, 41½ inches long and 3¾ inches wide; buckles for sword-belts, all of bronze, with broken pieces of iron buckles; bows and arrows in a more or less complete state, the most perfect bow being about 60 inches long, but both ends are somewhat damaged, and the original length seems to have been a couple of inches more; a great number of arrow-shafts, all of similar shape, between 26–35 inches long and ¼ inch thick, but the arrow-points are all destroyed, the iron having rusted; remnants of shields, flat and circular, composed of several smoothly-planed and pretty thin wooden boards, which are not equally broad all over, but become narrower towards the border:—the largest cross-measure is 42½ inches, the smallest 21 inches, the thickness of the middle boards, which as a rule are somewhat heavier than the rest, is about ½ to ¼ inch (the shield-buckles are of bronze, but broken pieces of iron ones have been found also; their cross-measure is between 6–7 inches); axes, whose blades are much decomposed by rust, with thirty good handles of ash and beechwood, which measured between 23 and 33½ inches in length; a few well-preserved spear-points, and others more or less destroyed by rust; four spear-handles, 32, 98½, 107½, and 116 inches in length; several riding and driving accoutrements; more than sixty fibulæ of many different styles; many broken pieces of gold rings, only two of which have been fitted together so as to form one complete ring; two spiral rings of bronze; a round pendant of gold; a hollow ornament of silver-mixed gold; a mass of beads; a piece of unworked amber; pincers; dice of amber; a variety of utensils and tools for domestic use, such as bowls of wood and clay, spoons, jugs, knives, &c.; two pairs of coarse woollen trousers, &c.; and several objects, the use of which is unknown.

[2] Thirty-seven *Roman coins* were found altogether. The earliest is of the year 60 A.D.; the latest, 194 A.D.—1 of *Nero*, 1 of *Vitellius*, 4 of *Vespasianus*, 1 of *Domitianus*, 7 of *Trajanus*, 6 of *Hadrianus*, 1 of *Aelius*, 6 of *Antoninus Pius*, 1 of *Faustina* the elder, 3 of *Marcus Aurelius*, 2 of *Faustina the younger*, 3 of *Commodus*, and 1 of *Septimius Severus*, the last-named being struck in the year 194 of our era.

must come to the conclusion that many of the objects found belong to the second century of our era. Among the most remarkable antiquities of warfare are the superb coats of mail found in the North, and the skill displayed in making war accoutrements at such an early period shows an advanced state of civilisation. These coats of mail (which are also found in graves) are a network of rings, each of which is run through four others. In their workmanship they vary:—in some the rings are clinched; in others only every other ring is riveted, the alternate ones being welded together, so that each clinched ring grasps four welded ones, and each welded ring grasps four riveted.

THORSBJERG FIND.

Fig. 351.—Trousers of woven woollen cloth.[1] Length 45 inches. Width round waist 38½ inches. On the waistband were several small loops which probably held the waistbelt. The socks which are sewn to the trousers are of the same pattern as that of the sleeves of the shirt, but the squares are smaller. ⅛ real size.

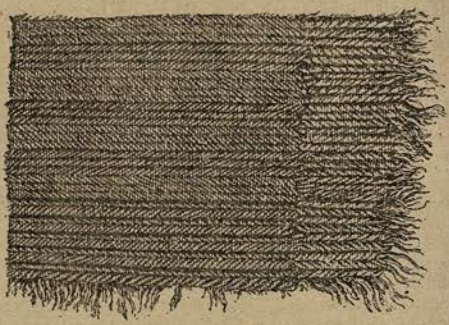


Fig. 352.

Fig. 353.

Fig. 354.
Fragments of woollen cloak, with border.

[1] On a superb silver vase at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, found in Southern Russia, is a representation of a man wearing similar trousers.

THORSBJERG FIND.

Fig. 355.—Woollen shirt or blouse 33½ inches long, 20 inches wide, with wristbands of a stronger cloth and a lighter colour than the shirt, which is brownish red. Both sleeves are of a stronger cloth than that of the body of the shirt. $\frac{1}{25}$ real size.

Fig. 356.—Woven border at bottom of the shirt.

Fig. 357.—Pattern of the body of the shirt.

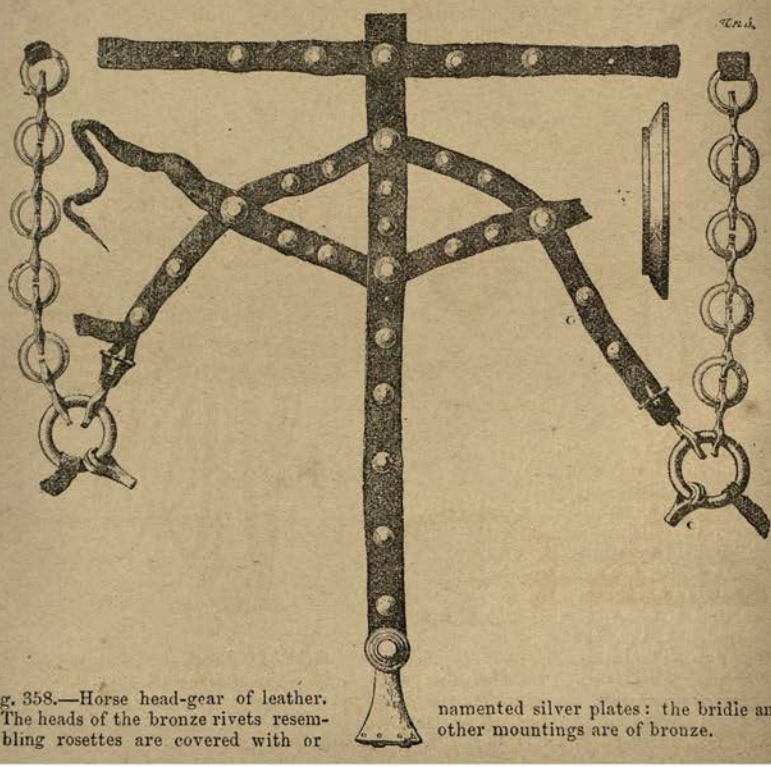


Fig. 358.—Horse head-gear of leather. The heads of the bronze rivets resembling rosettes are covered with ornamented silver plates: the bridle and other mountings are of bronze.

THORSBJERG FIND.

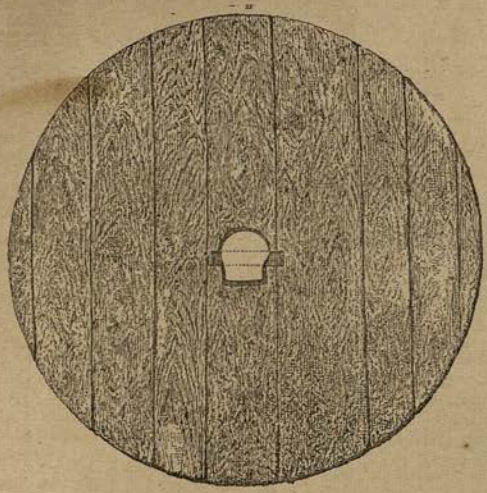


Fig. 359.—Flat round wooden shield, made of planed boards of different widths.

Fig. 360.—Wooden sword-hilt with bronze nails, the middle surrounded with braided bronze thread.

361. Fig.—Fibula of bronze with engraved ornament.

Fig. 362.—A pendant of gold. Real size.

Fig. 363.—Amber die, rounded so as not to stand on the number. Real size.

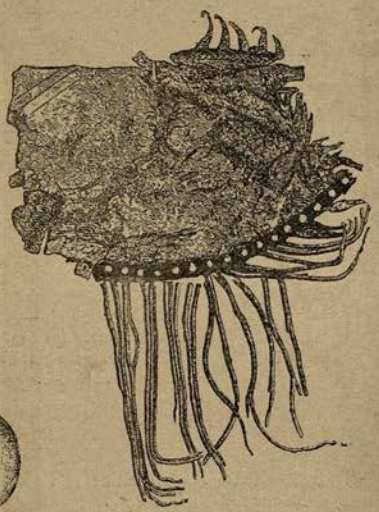


Fig. 364.—Remains of leather shoe. ⅓ real size.

THORSBJERG FIND.

Fig. 365.—Rake of wood with teeth, about nine inches long.

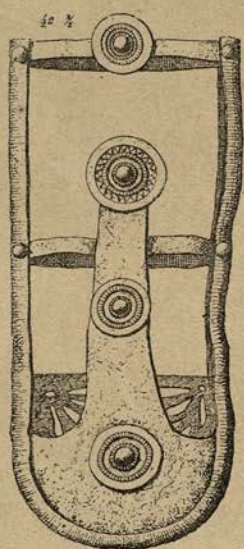


Fig. 366.—Ornament of bronze for scat bard. Heads of rivets plated with silver. ½ real size.

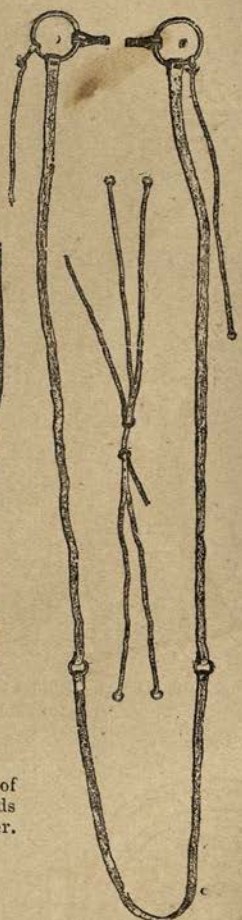


Fig. 367.—Rein, made of three pieces of leather, with bronze ring.

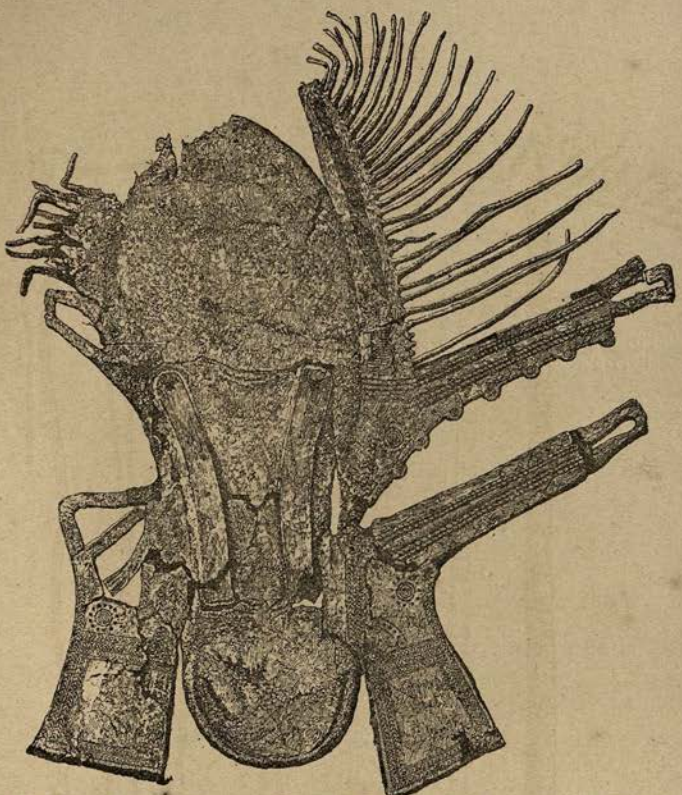


Fig. 368.—Leather sandal in one piece, for left foot. ⅓ real size. Fastened over the foot with narrow straps and buttons.

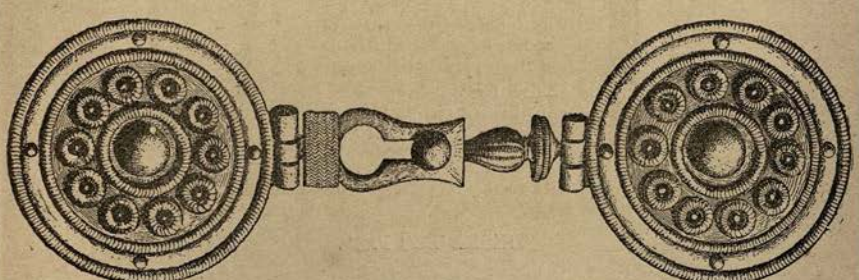


Fig. 369.—Shoulder clasp of bronze for ring armour, inlaid with gold and silver.

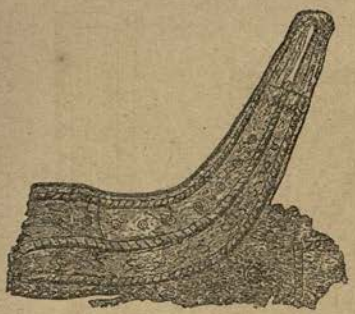


Fig. 370.—Fragment of a sandal with silver-plated rivets. ⅓ real size.

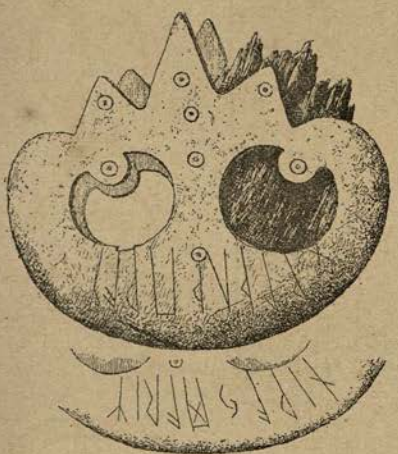


Fig. 371.—Ornament of bronze for wooden scabbard, with inscription in earlier runes. Real size.

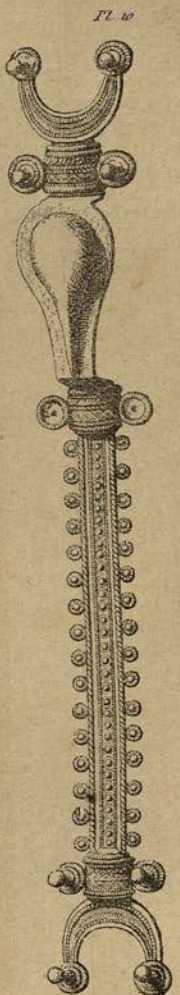


Fig. 372.—Bronze ornamentation for scabbard, plated with silver and gold. ½ real size.

THORSBJERG FIND.

Fig. 373.—Scabbard of wood, with bronze mounting.

Fig. 374. — Embossed mounting of a scabbard strap, silver-plated, the whole centre inlaid with a thin gold plate.

Fig. 375.—A bridle of bronze, the end-piece plated with silver and gold. ½ real size.

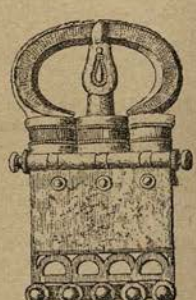


Fig. 376.—Silver-plated bronze buckle.

Fig. 378.—Shield boss with silver top.

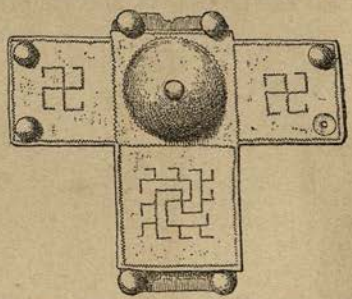


Fig. 379.—Mountings to leather straps with svastica and gilt knobs.

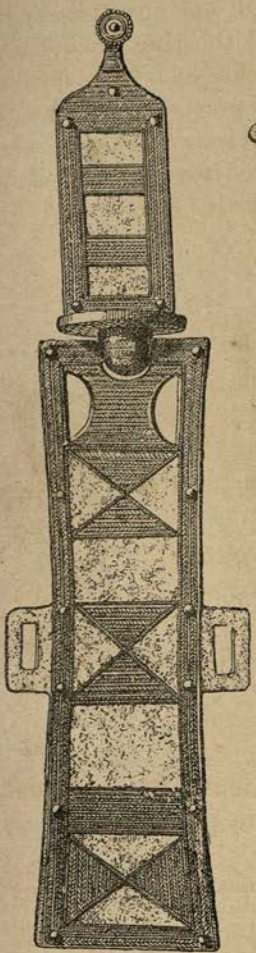


Fig. 377.—Bronze mounting on horses' head-gear, apparently plated.

Fig. 380.—Bronze and silver-plated mounting for leather used on horses' head-gear.

THORSBJERG FIND.

Vimose Bog Find.—The explorations in the Vimose bog,[1] situated about five miles from Odense, Fyen, commenced in 1848, and since that time 3,600 objects have been gathered together, all of which were found in a space of 9,000 square feet. Sometimes there seemed to be a certain order in the way in which the articles had been sunk, for all the ring armour was together, and a number of small articles had been placed inside a shield-boss, while other articles were surrounded with broad bands of cloth. Many of the objects here were also badly damaged. Only one coin has been found, *i.e.* a silver denarius of the time of the Empress Faustina Junior (d. 175),

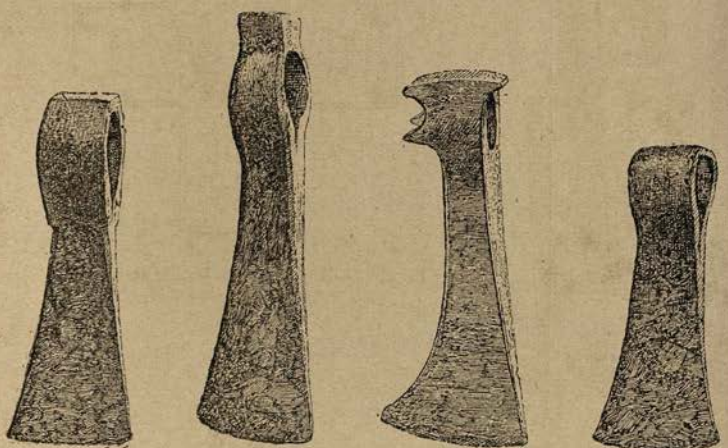


Fig. 381. Fig. 382. Fig. 383. Fig. 384.

Iron axe-heads. ⅓ real size.

with "Pudicitia" on its reverse. The number of single and double-edged swords, many of which are in tolerably good

[1] The principal objects in this find included a very great number of arrow shafts (most of them thoroughly decayed), with arrow-points of bone or iron; a remnant of a quiver of wood about 25 inches long; a mass of wooden scabbards, mostly for edged swords; 390 pieces of metal and bone mountings for the scabbards, some of silver, and one of bronze covered with silver and thin gold plates, with runes lightly traced; shield-boards, handles and buckles (180 of the latter of iron); about 150 knives, all of iron and different shapes; several remnants of belts, as well as about 40 buttons of bronze, some covered with gold, and about 60 double buttons of bronze; about 250 different pieces of buckles and other mountings of iron and bronze; about 150 different pieces of riding harness; a few horses' bones; bronze bowls, needles, keys; scissors; scythe-blades; 1 millstone; 1 small anvil; 6 hammers; 25 iron chisels; 3 iron files; 2 iron pincers; 57 bone combs, some with *svastica*, and one with runes on; 4 square, 2 oblong dice; amber, glass, and mosaic beads; fibulæ of bronze, iron, silver, &c., &c.

preservation, is 67. The single-edged swords, between 15¾

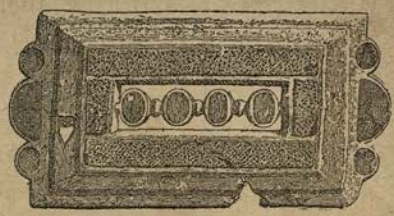


Fig. 385.—One of four bronze buckles, enamelled in red, green, and blue, the inside borders of black mosaic enamel. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 386.—Sax, or single-edged sword. ¼ real size.

Fig. 387.—Damascened sax. ¼ real size.

Fig. 388.—Bent sax, or single-edged sword. ¼ real size.

Fig 389.—Single-edged sax or iron sword. ¼ real size.

VIMOSE FIND.

and 24 inches long, are simply welded, sometimes having

ornaments traced on the blade, and several of these were still in their wooden scabbards when found. The double-edged swords vary in size from about 19 or 20 inches, to 35 or 36 inches. On several are factory stamps—a star-shaped sign on one side of the blade near the tongue or hilt point, and a ring-shaped figure on the sides of the hilt points, a mark which looks rather like a scorpion; in one stamp are Latin letters, which are somewhat difficult to decipher. Many are welded or forged from two united blades, while others are made of a single blade and have no factory mark. Fourteen are damascened in different patterns.

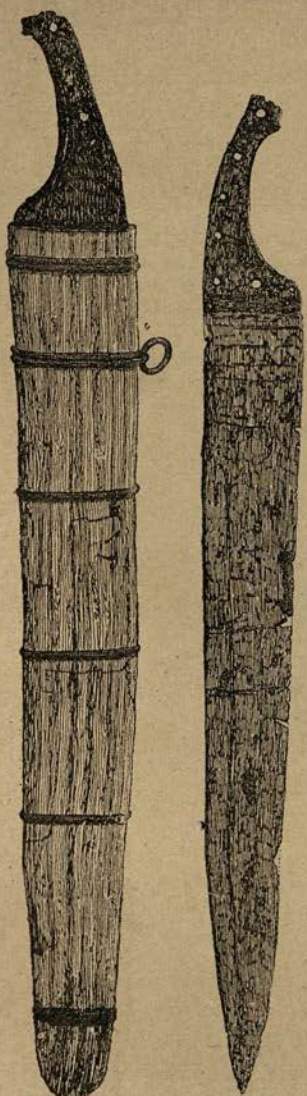


Fig. 390. Fig. 391.

Sax, or single-edged swords, one in wooden scabbard. ¼ real size.

In this remarkable find several enamelled objects have been discovered. This art appears to have been unknown to the nations of classical antiquity. There is no word for it in Greek or Latin. Philostratus,[1] when describing a wild boar hunt, mentions the beauty bosses (*φάλαρα*). And it is said that the barbarians by the ocean pour these colours

[1] This Greek writer, who lived at the beginning of the 3rd century, was called to the Roman Court by Faustina, wife of Septimius Severus, whose numerous coins are found, and if this art was known by the Romans he would certainly have described it.

"Around this youth is a group of young men of fine appearance, and engaged in fine pursuits, as beseems men of noble birth. One of them seems to bear on his countenance traces of the palæstra, another gives evidence of gentleness, a third of geniality: here is one who you would say had just looked up from his book; and of the horses on which they ride no two are alike, one is white, another chestnut, another black, another bay, and they have silver bridles, and their trappings are adorned with golden and decorated

and fine colour of the harness of the horses, and, when stating how these colours were produced, mentions that they were made by the barbarians living on the shores of the ocean.

Fig. 392.—Griffon's head, ornament belonging to helmet of bronze. Real size.

This description may very well refer to the people of the North, the great splendour of whose riding gear and chariots we see from the finds and sagas.

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on red-hot copper, and that the designs become hard, like stone, and are durable."—Philostratus, Imagines. Chapter on Boar-hunting.

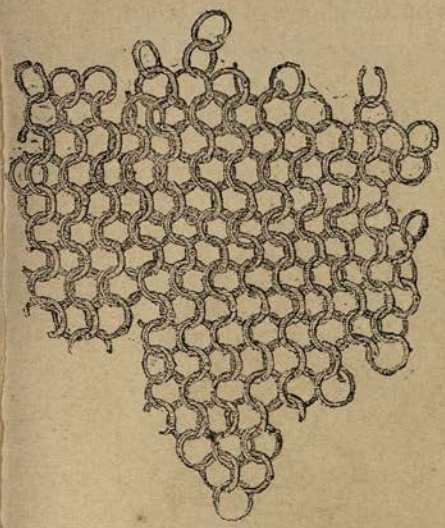

Fig. 393.—Fragments of ring-armour of hammered iron. Real size.

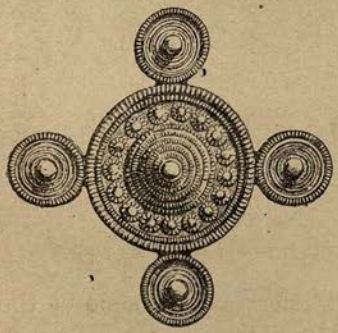

Fig. 394.—Bronze mounting, plated with gold silver, and belonging to ring-armour. Real size.

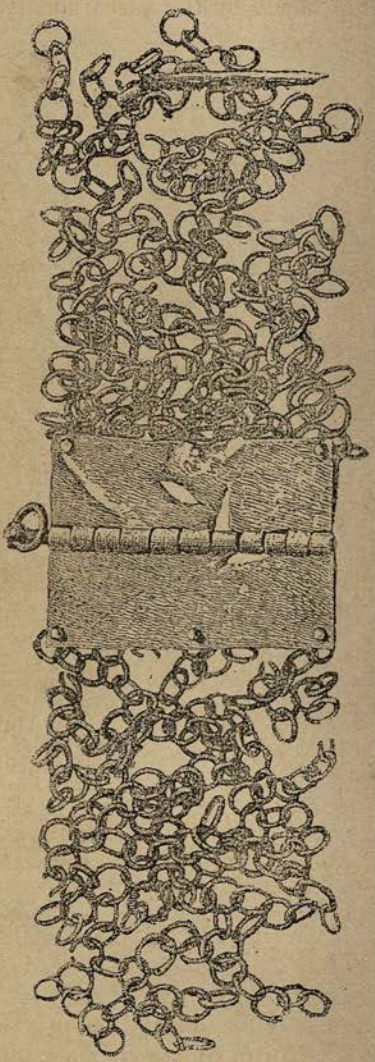

Fig. 395.—Remains of ring-armour of iron, with traces of gold plating. ½ real size.

Fig. 396.

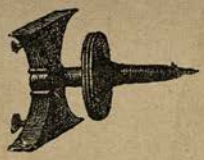

Fig. 397.

Fig. 398.

Spurs, one of bronze, with iron point; the others of iron.

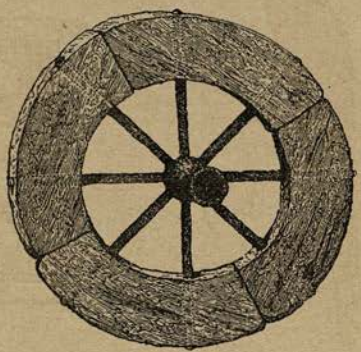

Fig. 399.—Wheel. $\frac{1}{10}$ real size.

Fig. 400.—Man's head on a piece of bronze covered with a thin gold plate. Real size.

Fig. 401.—Ferrule of silver for hilt plated with gold. Real size.

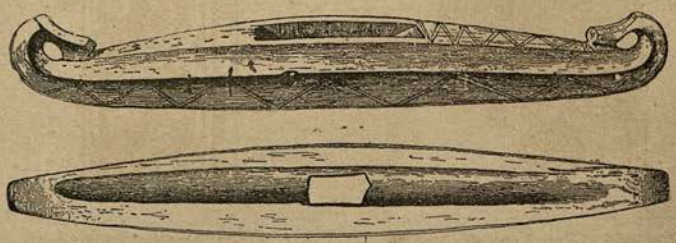

Fig. 402.—Parts of a wooden plane. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

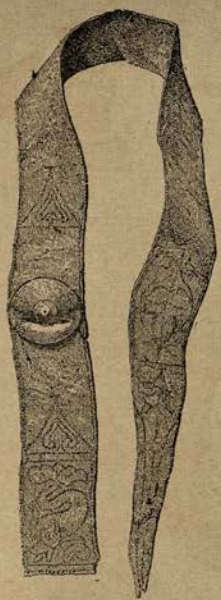

Fig. 403.—Shoulder-strap of leather, with bronze button and design of dolphin. About ½ real size.

Fig. 404. — Silver ornament plated with gold. Real size.

Fig. 405.—Fragment of wooden shield with gilt-headed nails.

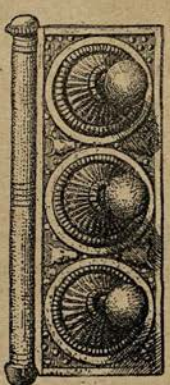

Fig. 406.—Silver-plated bronze ornament.

Over 1,000 spears were found; the handles of most of them were broken off, but five have been preserved complete; these are 8 feet 7⅔ inches long, 9 feet 2 inches long

Fig. 407.—Silver mounting to scabbard. ½ real size.

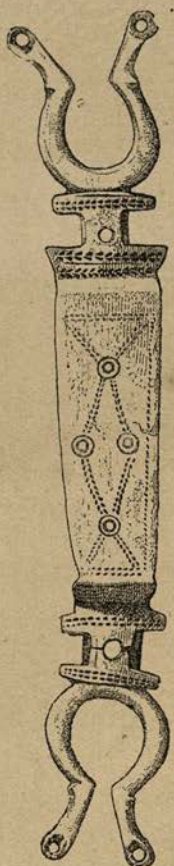

Fig. 408. — Silver mounting for scabbard. ½ real size.

Fig. 409.—One of 1,000 spears, inlaid with concentric circles. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 410.—One of 1,000 spears. ⅓ real size.

9 feet long, 11 feet long, and 6½ feet long. The handles are made of ash, and some spears are ornamented with threads of gold, silver or bronze inlaid in concentric circles; sometimes

ornaments are traced up the middle of the blade, and originally these also were filled with some kind of metal.

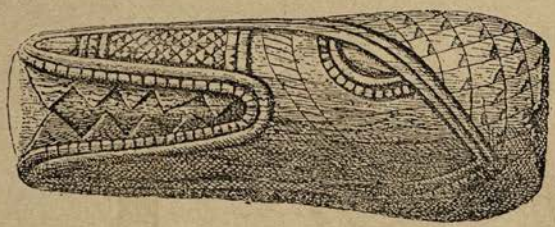

Fig. 411.—Crocodile's head carved in wood. Real size.

Fig. 412.—Brynja, or coat of mail, 3 feet long.

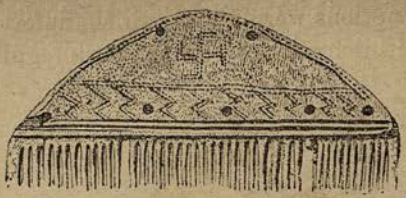

Fig. 413.—Bone comb with *svastica*. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

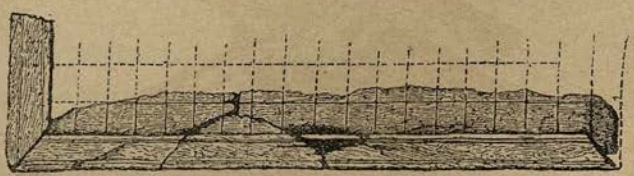

Fig. 414.—Fragments of checker-board. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

VIMOSE FIND.

Fig. 415.—Bronze enamelled bowl (1867), $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. high, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, in bog at Maltbœk, Jutland. The enamel in the serpentine line is red.

Kragehul Find.—In a small bog called Kragehul, situated near the city of Assens on Fyen, objects have been found which seem to belong to the 4th or 5th century. The first mention of the Kragehul bog is in 1751, when some articles

with rune inscriptions were found, which, unfortunately, have been lost, but it was not until 1864 that a regular exploration took place.[1]

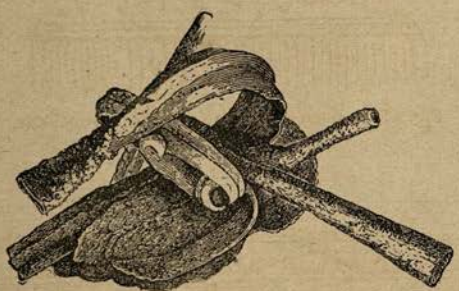

Fig. 416.—Bundle of bent weapons.

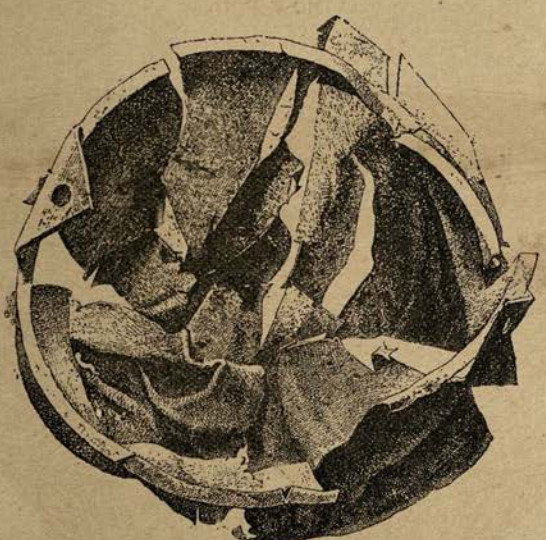

Fig. 417.—Bronze vessel destroyed by sword cuts. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

[1] The articles found include glass, mosaic, and porcelain beads; fragments of four bone combs; four tweezers of bronze, of which two hang on bronze rings; remains of wooden shields with metal mountings; bronze mountings; 10 iron swords, damascened in several patterns, the length of the blades being from 31 to 35 inches, their width $1\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 inches; and fragments of several others; fragments of wooden scabbards, of which one has remains of leather on it; several metal mountings for scabbards; a buckle of bronze; about 80 points of iron spears, all of different shapes; 30 spear-handles, ornamented with engraved lines, some straight, and others with snake lines; remains of a wooden bow, length $47\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and fragments of another; arrows; four

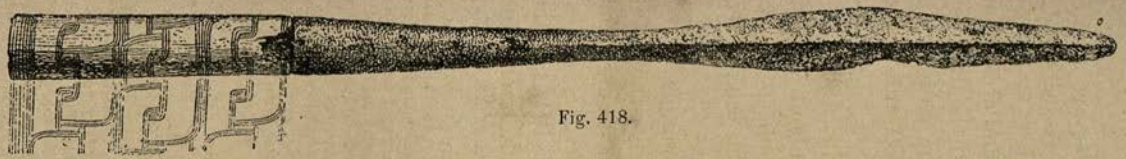

Fig. 418.

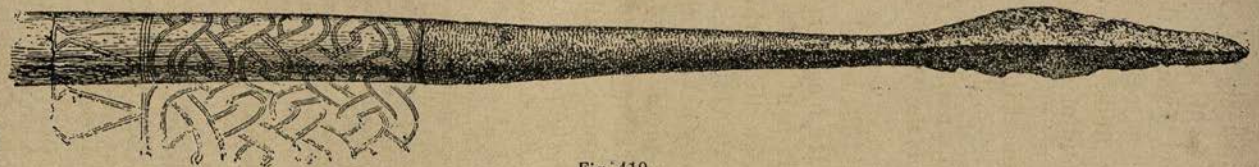

Fig. 419.

Iron spears with ornaments carved on the wooden handles. ½ real size.

KRAGEHUL FIND.

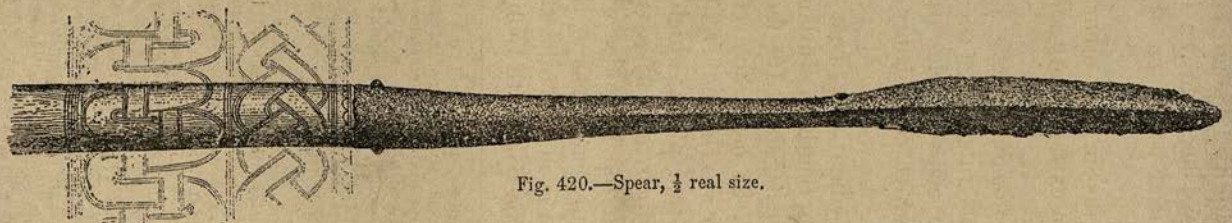

Fig. 420.—Spear, ½ real size.

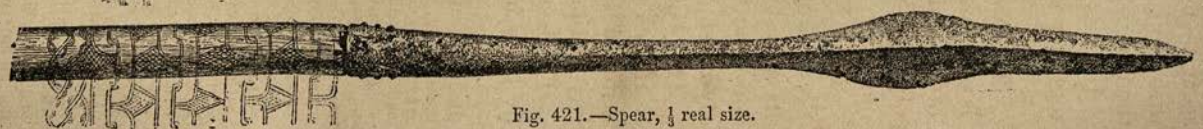

Fig. 421.—Spear, ½ real size.

The antiquities, none of which are of Roman origin, seem to have been thrown in without any order, but spears with thin iron points on the end formed the boundary of the find.

In this as in the other bog finds, weapons are twisted together in extraordinary knots and many objects destroyed.

The Nydam Bog Find.—The remarkable bog find at Nydam [1] is extremely valuable on account of the boat, and the discovery of Roman coins enables us to approximate the date of the objects,[2] which is probably about the years 250 and 300 of our era.

The Nydam oak boat was discovered in 1863 near Slesvig, in Southern Jutland. Its length is about 75 feet; its widest part, about 10½ feet. It held 14 benches, and was rowed with 28 oars, the average length of which was 12 feet. By its side was the rudder, about 10 feet long.

The bottom plank, which is not a keel proper, is 45 feet 3 inches long, and of a single piece. The oar-tholes are fastened to the gunwales with bast ropes, and, though they have all one general shape, there are no two alike.

The boat is clinch-built; that is, the planks are held together by large iron bolts with round heads outside, and clinch plates

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whole iron knives, between 7 and 10 inches long, and several handles and fragments; four oval-shaped whetstones and fragments of a square one; five small balance-weights; fragments of a heavy wooden post and of a small twig; some mountings of silver which probably belonged to riding harness; bones of three animals; &c., &c.

[1] Among the objects found in the bog were 106 iron swords, all double-edged, with handles of wood sometimes covered with silver, or of bone or massive bronze; 93 damascened in different patterns, two wrought from two different pieces, and only eleven simply wrought. On several there are Latin inscriptions, and on one blade runes inlaid in gold. The condition in which the swords were when buried is peculiar. Generally they were without hilts and bent, on many were found deep cuts on both edges, one having 23 cuts on one, and 11 cuts on the other edge. Wooden scabbards, with mountings of bronze; mountings to sword-belts; buckles of iron and bronze; rings with loose end-mountings; 70 iron shield buckles; iron axes; iron bridles, three of which were still in the mouths of (skeleton) horses; 552 iron spear-points, several ornamented with gold; several hundred spear-handles; numerous household utensils of wood; several hundred arrow-shafts with traces of marks of ownership on them, and some with runes, &c.

[2] Thirty-four Roman coins, struck between the years 69 and 217 A.D., are so-called denarii of silver, and date from the time of *Vitellius* (1), *Hadrian* (1), *Antoninus Pius* (10), two of which have the mark of DIVVS; *Faustina the elder* (4), *Marcus Aurelius* (7) (partly as Cæsar, between the years 140–143, and partly as Imperator), *Faustina the younger* (1), *Lucius Verus* (2), *Lucilla* (2), *Commodus* (5), and *Macrinus* (1), the latter a very rare coin, struck in 217 A.D.

on the inside, at a distance of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches from each other. The

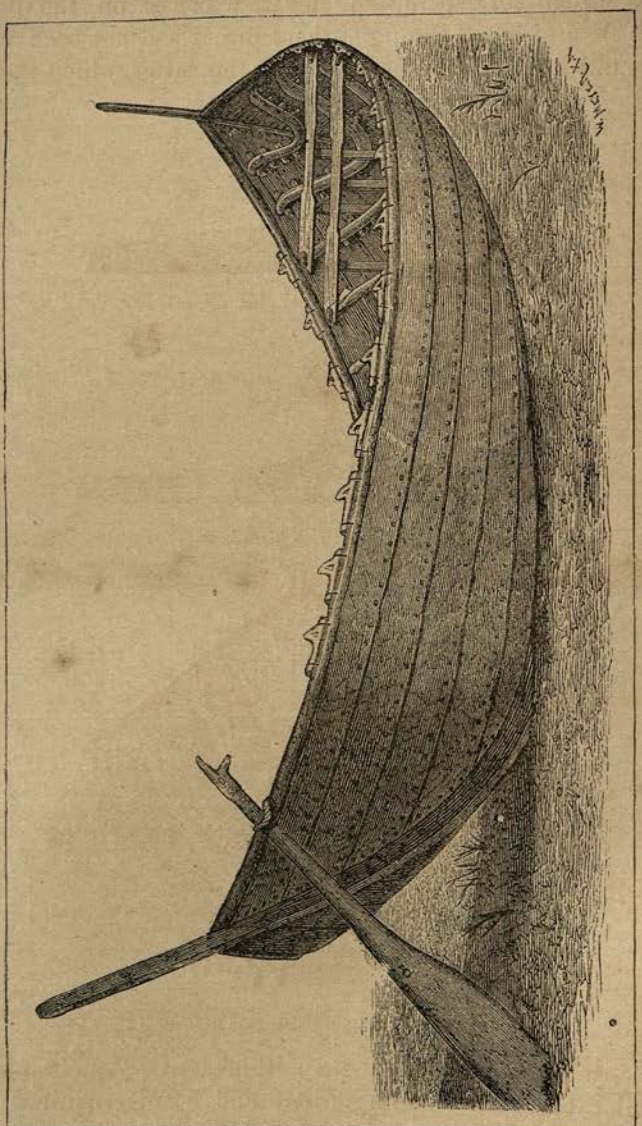


Fig. 422.

space between the planks is filled with woollen stuff and a pitchy sticky mass. The boards are joined in a very common

manner to the frame with bast ropes. In the frame are holes, which correspond to elevated pieces on the boards which are also bored through; these pieces had not been nailed to the planks, but were hewn out of the latter, which thereby

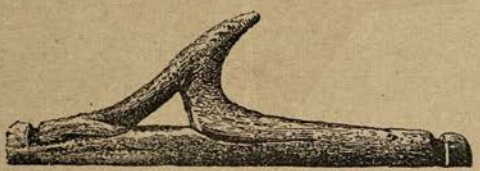


Fig. 423.—Oar-thole of red pine. $\frac{1}{10}$ real size.

Fig. 424.—Oar-thole of the Nydam boat. $\frac{1}{7}$ real size.

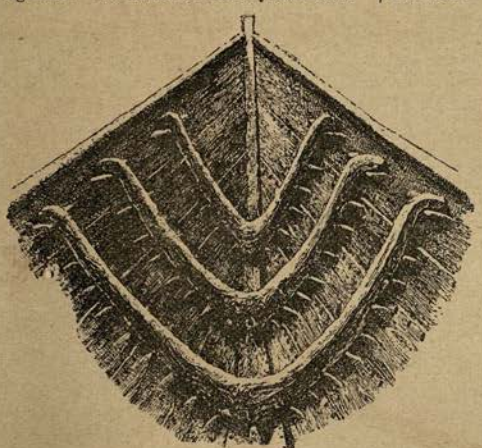


Fig. 425.—Inside view of one of the stems of the Nydam boat.

had lost more than half their thickness. Vessels by this peculiar manner of joining frame and boards acquired great elasticity, which must have been of good service in the surf and in a heavy sea.

The boat was shaped alike both fore and aft, so that it could

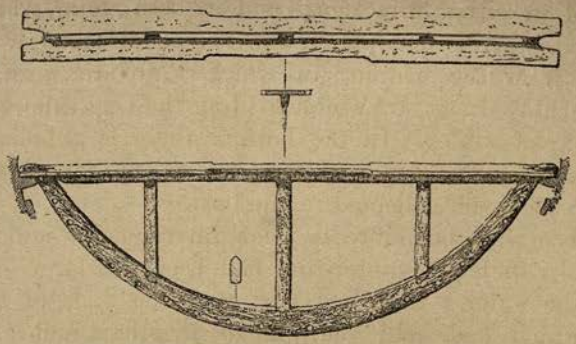


Fig. 426.—Rib of boat, showing seat attached.

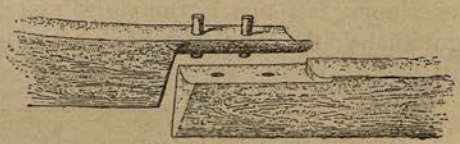


Fig. 427.—Wooden pegs fastening stem to bottom plank. $\frac{1}{17}$ real size.

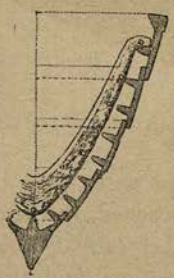


Fig. 428.—Showing how the boards joined the ribs.

Fig. 429.—End face view of oar-thole. $\frac{1}{10}$ real size.

Fig. 430.—Rudder, 10 feet long, found alongside Nydam boat.

be rowed in either direction; and in both stems, which are fastened to the bottom plank, are two holes through which, judging from the manner in which they are worn, ropes were probably drawn, by which to drag the boat ashore at the beginning of winter. In the bottom there is a hole, which probably after the ship had been drawn up served to give outlet to the water collected in the boat.

The boat had undoubtedly been intentionally sunk, for in the planks under the water-line had been cut large holes to let in the water. Rust had destroyed the ends of the iron bolts which had held the planks together, and also the ropes with which the boards and the frame had been held together. The planks fell apart, therefore, and took their original straight shape; the oar-tholes were loosened from the

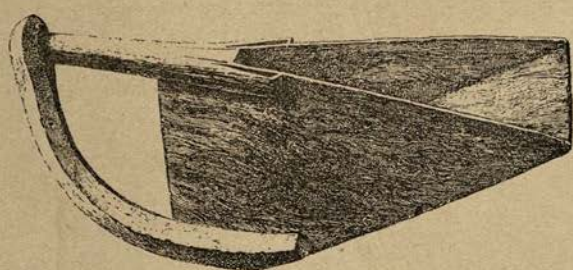


Fig. 431.—Wooden scoop for baling water. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

gunwale; the frame fell on different sides, and the two high stems fell down. As the joints loosened, the separate pieces sank to the bottom, and remained lying at about an equal depth, while the turf grew up above them and preserved them from destruction. After all the parts of the boat had been carefully collected and dried, it was possible to restore it to its original shape.

Another boat of red pine wood was discovered alongside it. This one was laid on the field and covered with bog mould, until the work connected with the other boat was finished. Unfortunately the war of 1864 put an end to the examination of the Nydam bog, so that the boat was left lying on the field, and strangers have carried off many pieces of it. The bottom plank was about 50 feet long, 13 inches broad, and ends in two spurs

or rams. How high the prows were raised above the plank cannot be stated. Since this date the diggings have been done by inexperienced men, and consequently have given but little results. This sacred part of the land of the Danes had passed into the hands of its German conquerors, for the *Nornir*[1] are fickle, and what is fated to one generation to accomplish is often, in the course of time, undone by another.

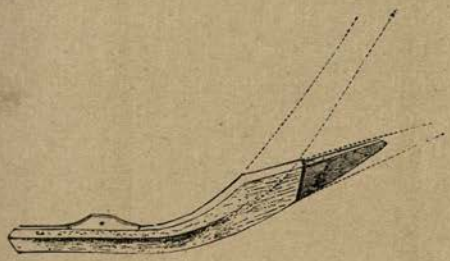


Fig. 432.—The end of the bottom plank of a vessel of red pine, with a ram at each end, from Nydam Bog-find. The pointed lines show how the spurs protruded from the stem.

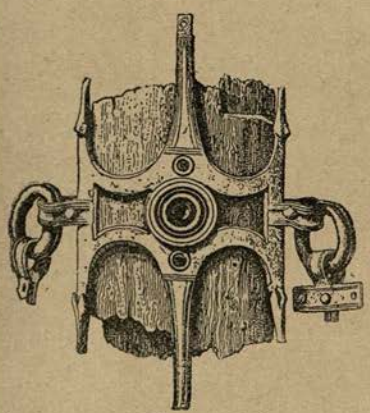


Fig. 433.

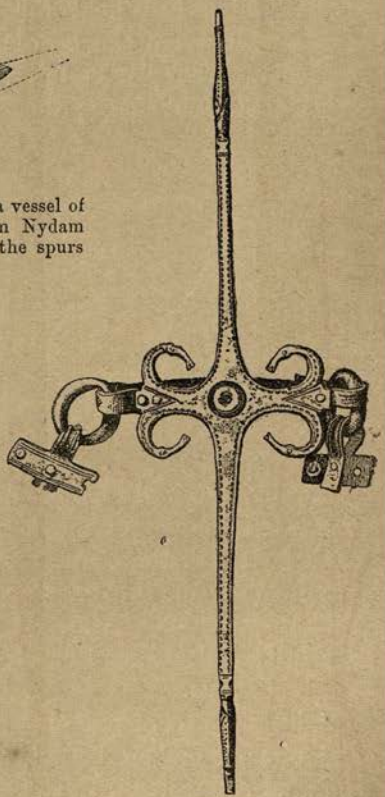


Fig. 434.

Fragments wooden scabbard with bronze mountings. ½ real size.

NYDAM BOG FIND.

[1] See p. 385.

Fig. 435.—A throwing spear with line attached, length of spear 10 feet. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 436.—Spear-head. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 437.—Leaf-shaped spear-point ornamented with engraved lines. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

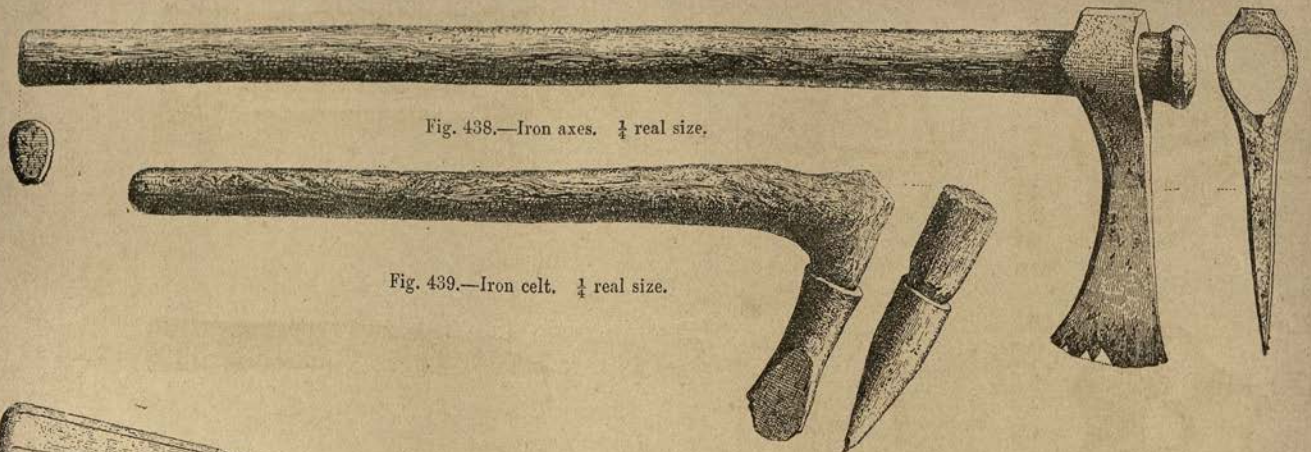


Fig. 438.—Iron axes. ¼ real size.

Fig. 439.—Iron celt. ¼ real size.

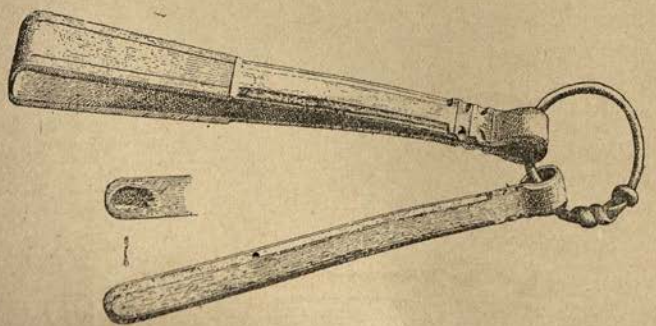


Fig. 440.—Tweezer and earpick of bronze hanging on a bronze ring. Real size.

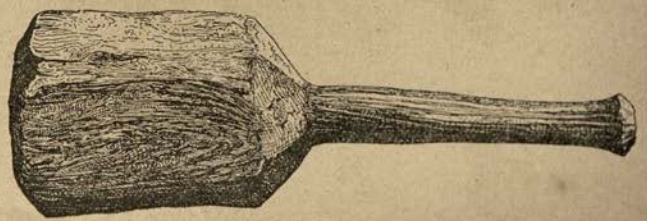


Fig. 441.—Wooden club. ⅛ real size.

Fig. 442. — Black glass bead. Real size.

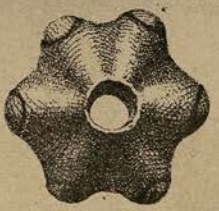


Fig. 443. — Light-green glass bead, with yellow points on a dark-red ground. Real size.

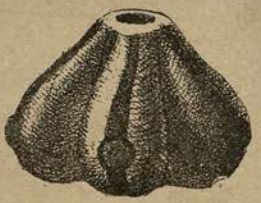


Fig. 444.—Green glass bead with red stripes. Real size.

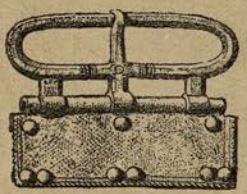


Fig. 445.—½ real size.

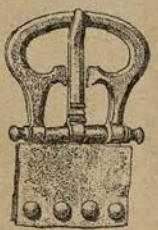


Fig. 446.—½ real size.

Buckles.

Fig. 447.—Silver tweezers. Real size.

Fig. 448.—Silver ear spoon. ½ real size.

Fig. 449. — Iron knife with wooden handle. ¼ real size.

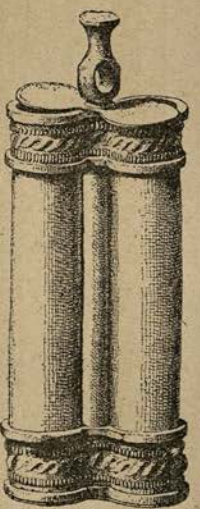


Fig. 450.—Double-barrelled tube of silver found with ear pick. Real size.

Fig. 451.

Fig. 452.

Wooden bows, with notches at the end for fastening the string. $\frac{1}{11}$ real size.

Fig. 453.—Part of a wooden bow. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

Fig. 454.—Part of arrow-shaft bearing runic stave. Real size.

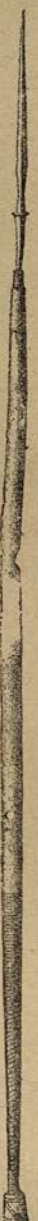


Fig. 455.—Arrow-shaft. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 456.—Arrow-shaft with owner's mark. Real size.

Fig. 457.—Arrow-point of iron. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 458. Fig. 459. Fig. 460.
Bronze mountings for a quiver. ¼ real size.

Fig. 461.—¼ real size.

Fig. 462.—½ real size.

Fig. 463.—Wooden quiver. ¼ real size.

Fragments of wooden scabbards with bronze mountings.

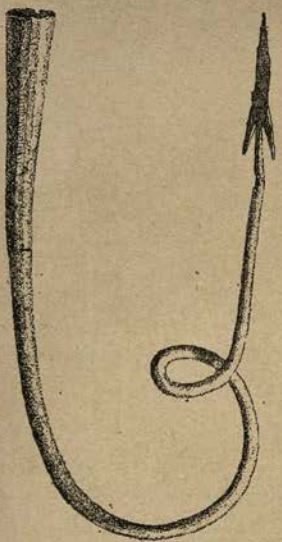


Fig. 464.—Bearded spear-head, bent and twisted. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 465. Bearded spear-points of iron. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 466.

Fig. 467.—Iron spear-point, bayonet shaped. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 468. Iron spear-points. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 469.

Fig. 470.—Leaf shaped iron spear-point. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 471.—Iron sword, damascened, bearing Latin inscription. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 472.—Iron sword bearing Latin inscription. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 473. — Iron sword bearing Latin inscription.

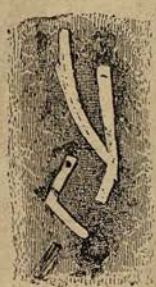


Fig. 474. — Part of sword blade with runes inlaid with gold.

Fig. 475.

Fig. 476.

Damascened blades. ⅔ real size.

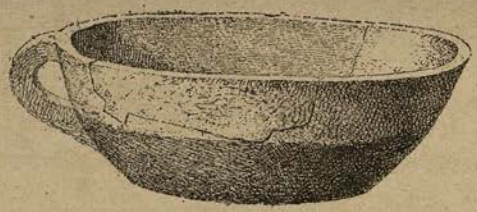


Fig. 477.—Wooden bowl. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

Fig. 478.

Fig. 479.

Iron ferrules to scabbard, inlaid with flat hammered gold wire. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

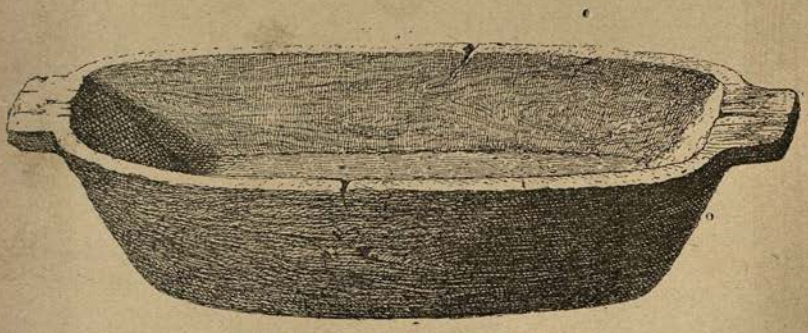


Fig. 480.—Wooden trough. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

NYDAM BOG FIND.

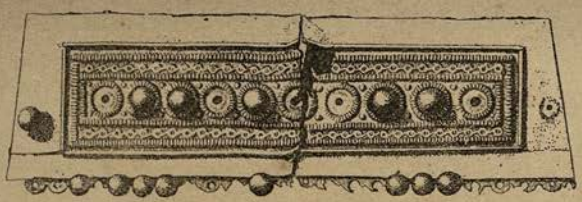


Fig. 481.

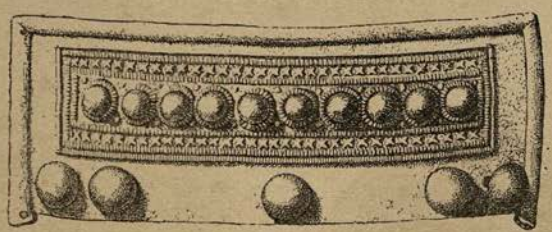


Fig. 482.
Ornaments of bronze plated with thin silver and gold. Real size.

Fig. 483.—Bit of bronze. ¼ real size.

Fig. 484.—Bit of iron. ¼ real size.

Fig. 485.—Double-edged damascened sword with silver handle. ⅓ real size.

Fig. 486.—Double-edged damascened sword. ⅓ real size.

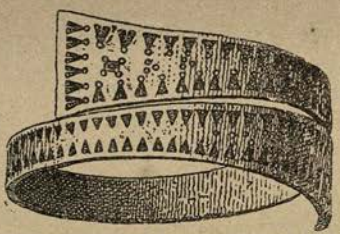


Fig. 487.—Spiral bracelet of gold with triangular ornaments, ½ real size, found in a bog near Horsens, Denmark.

Fig. 488.

Fig. 489.

Damascened iron sword, ¼ real size, of the later iron age, with mounting for scabbard, made of silver, in relief work and gilt. Found in a bog near Slagelse on Zealand, Denmark.

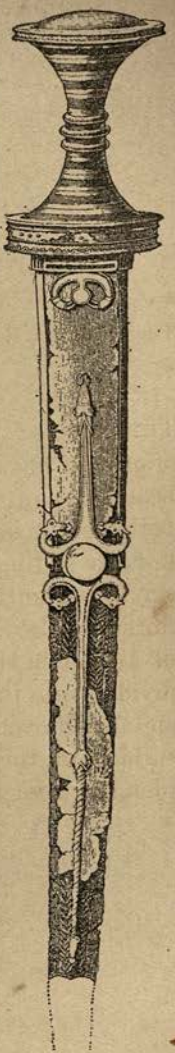


Fig. 490.—Iron sword, with bronze handle, ⅙ real size, found in a bog at Fremlöse, not far from the town of Odense, on Fyen, with fragments of two other iron swords, &c. Earlier iron age.

CHAPTER XIII.

NORTHERN RELICS—GROUND FINDS.

The custom of hiding objects—Discovery of numerous golden objects near the surface—Necklaces of gold—Golden horns discovered at Mögletönder—The Bangstrup find.

THE objects found in the earth, and classified under the name of *ground finds*, are often not only very valuable but also very beautiful; in many instances they are of the same type and period as those of the bogs and graves. The custom of intentionally hiding objects which existed in the stone and bronze age lasted until the end of the Viking age, and one of the finest archæological fields in the whole of Scandinavia is that of Broholm, situated on the island of Fyen. These finds are divided into three principal groups, viz.:—Lundeborg, Gudme, and Elsehoved. Almost all the objects were so near the surface of the soil that they were discovered either when ploughing, or digging with a spade.

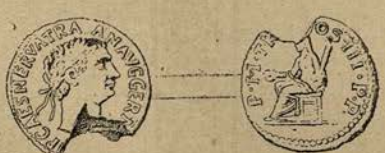


Fig. 491.—Denarius; Trajan (98–117). Broholm. Real size.

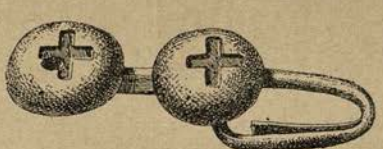


Fig. 492.—Fibula of bronze. Broholm. Real size.

Fig. 493.—Solidus: temp. Constantine II. (337–61), found near Hesselagergaard, Broholm, 1875. Real size.

Fig. 494.—Largest Neck-ring, Broholm. Heaviest rings, weight 3 lbs., 1 lb. 14½ oz., 1 lb. 2½ oz.; ½ real size. Among other objects discovered with this neck-ring were three other neck-rings, one weighing about 2 lbs. 2 ozs., another 1½ lb.; six pieces of massive gold belonging to neck-rings; six spiral gold rings; a spiral finger-ring of gold; bent gold bars probably used as money; and bracteates.

Fig. 495.—Roll of flat gold band.

Fig. 496.—Gold bead. Real size. Broholm.

Fig. 497.—Gold band.

Fig. 498.—Solidus: temp. Constantine II. Broholm. Real size.

Fig. 499.—Gold Neck-ring, from Hesselagergaard, Broholm. $\frac{3}{5}$ real size.

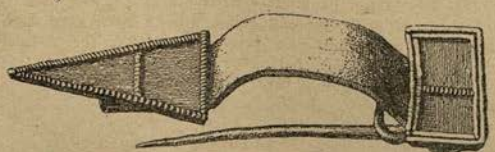
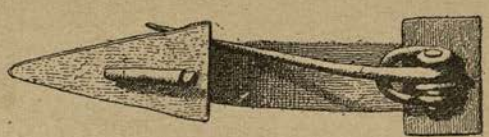


Fig. 500.—Fibula of gold. Broholm. Real size.



Reverse of Fig. 500.

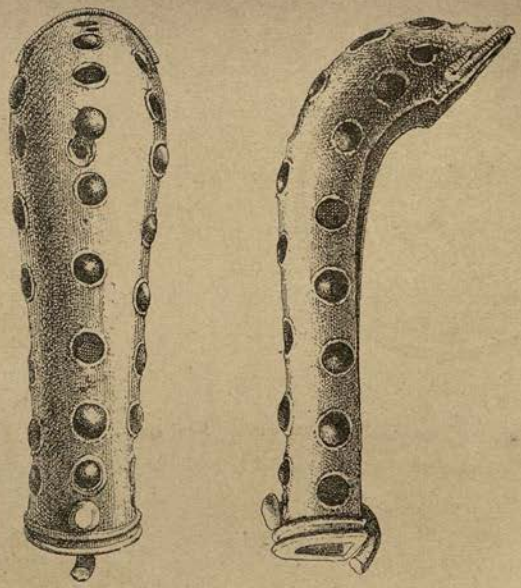
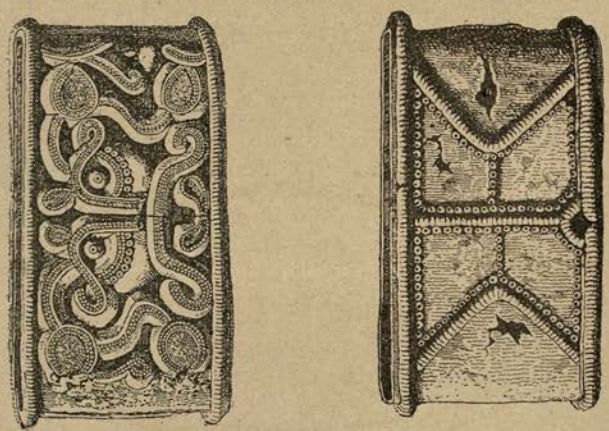


Fig. 501.—Hollow gold object, ornamented with cornelians, found at Lundeberg, Broholm. Real size.



Reverse of Fig. 502.

Fig. 502.—Gold Mounting for sword scabbard. Real size. Broholm.

Fig. 503.

Fig. 504.

Gold bracteates. Real size.

Fig. 505.—Mosaic bead.
Real size.

Fig. 506.—Gold bracteate, showing fibula on the neck. Real size.

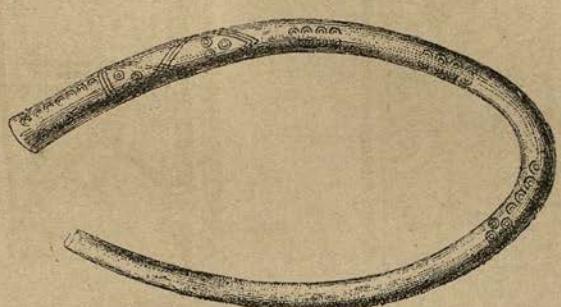


Fig. 507.—Gold ring used as money. Real size.

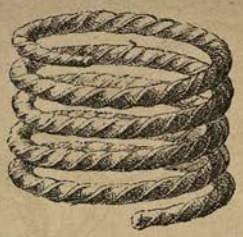


Fig. 508.—Gold spiral ring. Elsehoved, Broholm. Real size.

Fig. 509.—Fibula of copper covered with gold, and ornamented with garnets, one of which remains intact; a bird will be seen at the bottom. ½ real size.

Fig. 510.—Roman coins of the 5th century, forming part of a necklace, with a string of gold beads (Valentinianus, 425–455; Julius Majorianus, 457–461; two Leo I., 457–474; Zeno, 474–491; two Anastasius, 491–515).

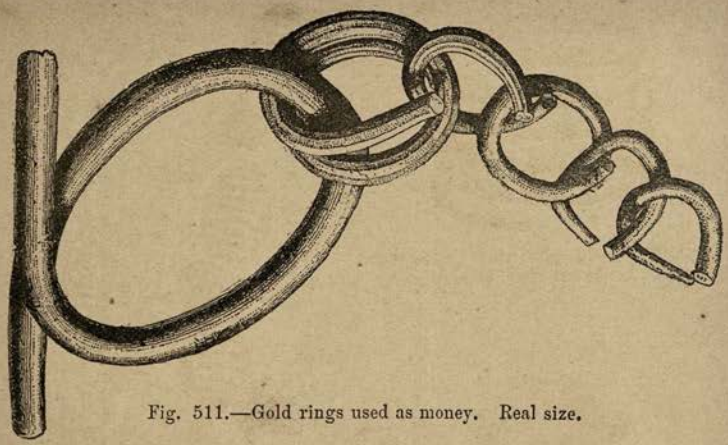


Fig. 511.—Gold rings used as money. Real size.

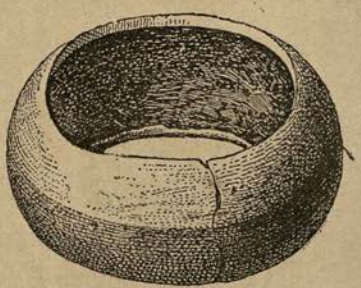
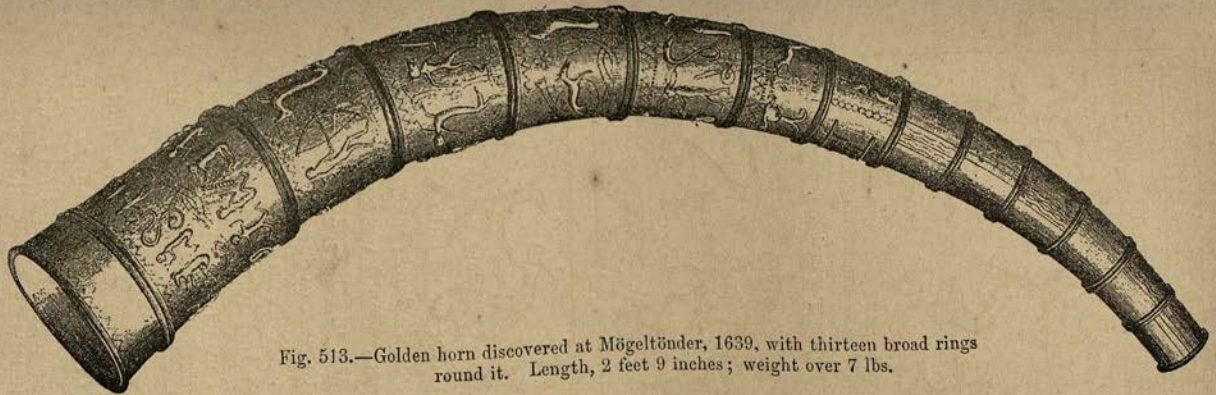


Fig. 512.—Ring of gold. Real size.

Among the finest and most valuable objects found in the North were the two superb golden horns discovered at Mögeltönder on the peninsula of Jutland, which were once the pride of the great Museum of Northern Antiquities in Copenhagen.

They were without equals in any part of the world; their exterior was made of different bands of gold, with figures in repoussé work, fastened to the harder gold of the body of the horn. Both were stolen from the old Danish Museum on the 4th of May, 1802, and the ignorant thief melted them; thus those two superb specimens were for ever lost to science, and with an unfortunate fatality the cast of each has also been lost; but luckily the drawings made can be relied on. The thief was captured a year after, and his punishment was not adequate to the crime he had committed.

The representations given upon them must have had a meaning; these were symbolical, and were probably very significant and not used for mere ornamentation; what the figures and symbolical signs meant is impossible for us to tell. Among the most remarkable of the former is the



⅛ real size.

Fig. 513.—Golden horn discovered at Mögeltönder, 1639, with thirteen broad rings round it. Length, 2 feet 9 inches; weight over 7 lbs.

⅓ real size.

Fig. 514.—Golden horn discovered at Mögeltönder, 1734. The exact length of this horn, which had round its broadest end an inscription in earlier runes, has not been stated, but, judging from a *facsimile* in silver gilt made by command of Frederick VII. from the old drawing, and presented by him to the old Northern Museum, it must have been over 20 inches long. Though the lower part was broken off and lost, it still weighed more than 8 lbs.

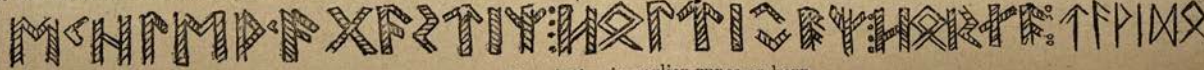


Fig. 515.—Inscription in earlier runes on horn.

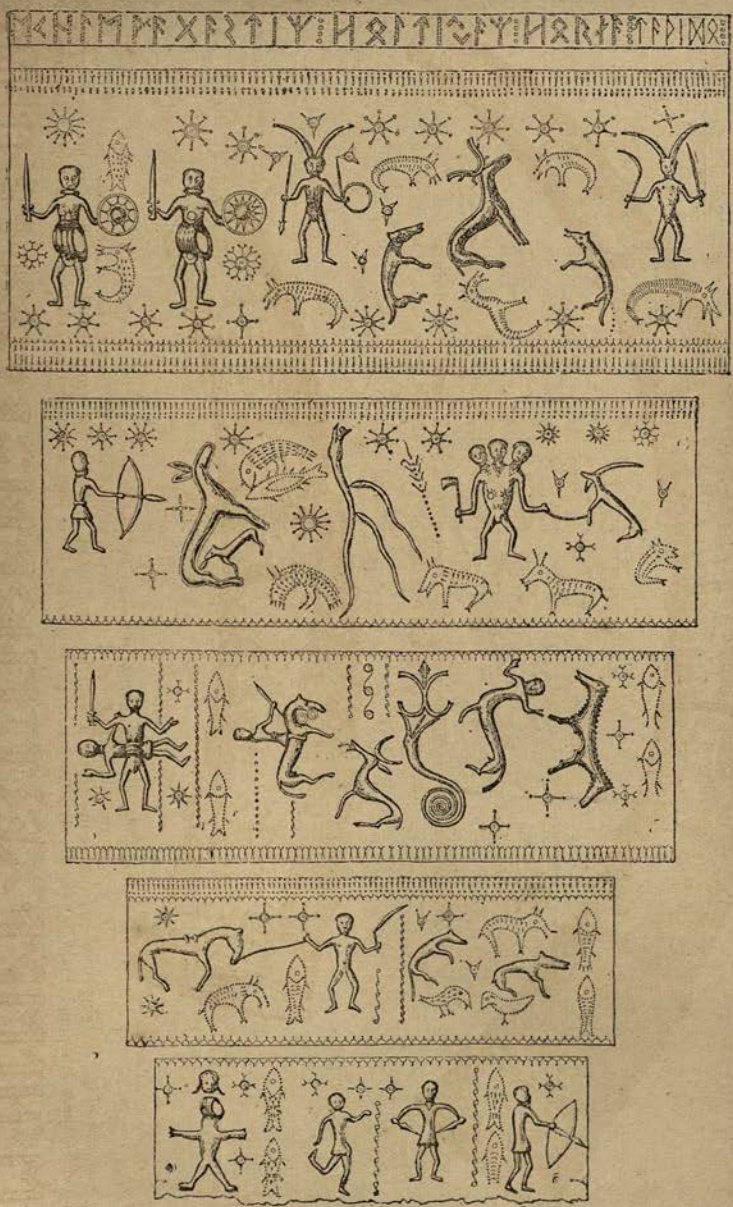


Fig. 516.—Facsimile of each ring of the damaged horn (Fig. 514).

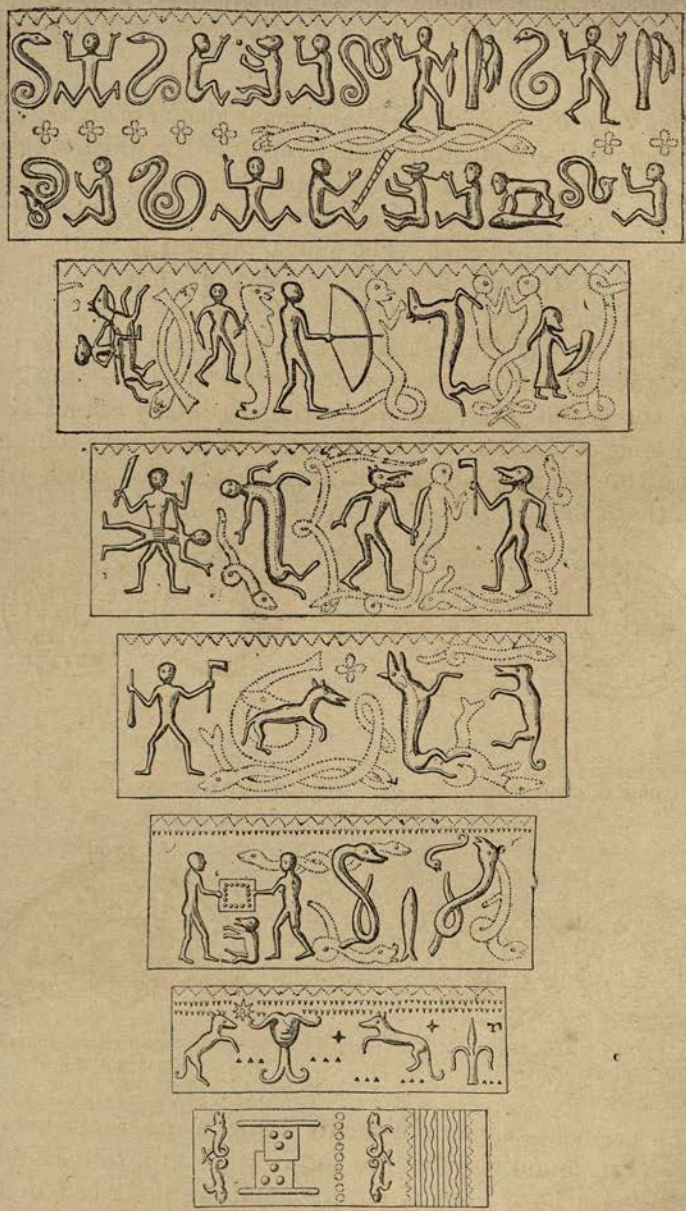


Fig. 517.—Facsimile of the rings of the perfect horn (Fig. 513).

three-headed man, holding in one hand what appears to be an axe, while with the other he leads some kind of horned animal.

Bangstrup Find (Fyen).—Conspicuous among many remarkable finds is the Bangstrup find (Fyen, 1865), in which rings of gold used as money, ornaments of peculiar shape, and 46 gold Roman coins, which were pierced or had a loop attached to the top, were discovered. The coins, ranging from the time of Trajanus Decius (249–251) to that of Constantine II. (337–351), give an approximate idea of the time of the deposit of the find; for, while most of the earlier coins are well worn, the later ones are very well preserved and the coinage is very sharp and clear, thus indicating that they cannot have been long in circulation. As the dates of these later coins are about 340–350, the find cannot have been buried much later than that time.

307–323.

Fig. 518.

IMP. LICINIVS. P. F. AVG.
ORIENS AVGVSTORVM.

306–337.

Fig. 519.

CONSTANTINVS PFAVG.
VICTORIA. CONSTANTINI. AVG.

Fig. 520.—Gold coin.

Fig. 521.—Crescent-shaped pendant of gold.

The crescent-shaped ornaments have, so far as is known, never been found elsewhere in the North; but in the Ukraine similar ones have been discovered, and are described in the work "Account of the Mounds, &c., of the Government of Kiew," by Privy Councillor J. Foundoukleï, Kief, 1848.

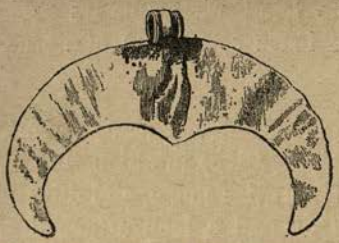


Fig. 522.—Crescent-shaped pendant of gold.

Fig. 523.—Crescent of gold pendant-shaped: representing two lions drinking out of a cup.

Fig. 524.—Leaf-shaped pendant of thin sheet gold.

Fig. 525.—Leaf-shaped pendant, sheet gold.

Fig. 526.—Rectangular pendant of sheet gold, with embossed human figure.

Fig. 527.—Semi-spherical gold ornamentation of unknown use.

BANGSTRUP FIND.

CHAPTER XIV.

DESCRIPTION OF SOME REMARKABLE GRAVES AND THEIR CONTENTS.

Sepulchral chambers containing skeletons—The objects in these graves not destroyed—Numerous Roman and Greek objects—The Vallöby grave—The Bavenhöi grave—The Varpelev graveyard.

To return to the subject of graves, we will now speak of the sepulchral chambers containing skeletons. They generally vary in size, from the length of a man upwards, being about four feet wide and two or three feet high. Sometimes the

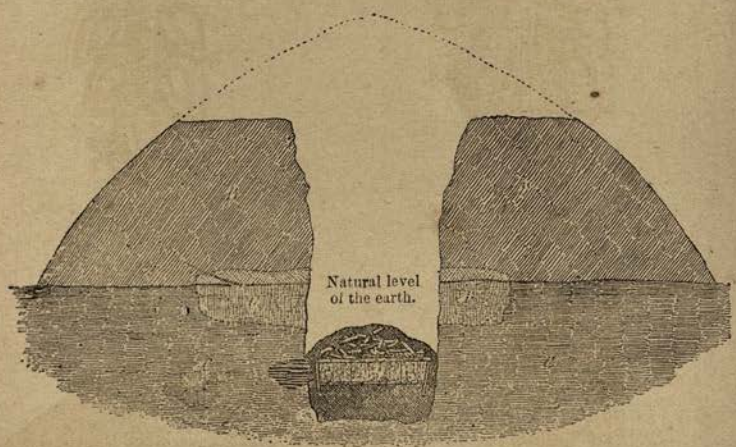


Fig. 528.—Mound, about 13 feet above the ground, showing sepulchral chamber five feet below the surface. The body had been placed upon woollen pillows filled with down. Six oak logs supported the side planks forming the sepulchral chamber, which had an oak floor. The space between the timbers had been filled with tresses of wool and other hair of animals. The chamber had been carefully covered with clay.—Bjerring, near Viborg, Northern Jutland.

corpse had been laid upon woollen stuff, cattle-hair, or birch-bark, the head turned southwards, and the feet towards the north. The inside lining is often of planks, between which

and the outer stone wall bark has been placed, the seams between the timber being filled with pitch. Above the burial-chamber, which was sometimes below the level of the ground, a mound or cairn was often raised.

The objects found in these graves have not been destroyed, and the weapons, which are few, have not been made useless.

In the graves containing skeletons are found costly silver

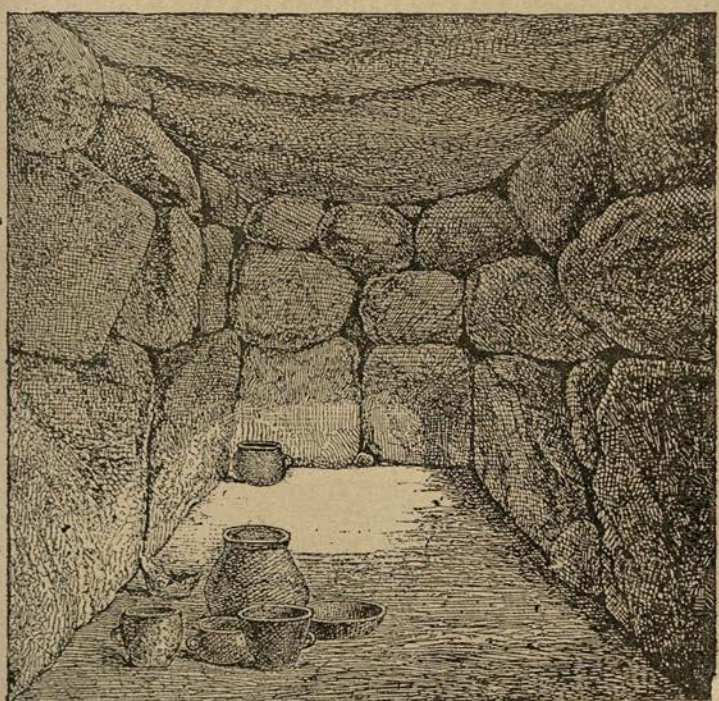


Fig. 529.—Burial Chamber, Nörrevingstrup, near Hjörring, Jutland. Inside measurement—height, 4 feet; length, 5½ feet; breadth, 3½ feet.

and glass cups, pottery, wooden pails with metal mountings, drinking-horns or their fragments; gold, silver, bronze, or silver-gilt jewelry; great masses of glass, amber, gold and mosaic beads; metal mirrors (these are scarce), bone combs, riding and driving harness, &c. The damaged weapons are often richly ornamented, and of exquisite workmanship.

A remarkable fact is the number of unmistakable Roman

and Greek objects, and sometimes coins, which occur in the finds. In the graves of women the objects chiefly found are pins, needles, buttons, jewels, ornaments, combs, knives, &c.

Vallöby Grave.—The antiquities in this grave plainly show two civilisations: the Roman or Greek, as represented by the

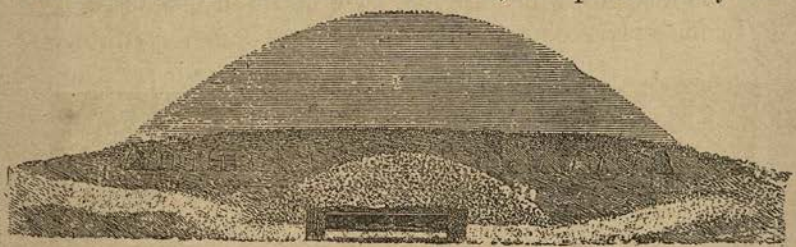


Fig. 530.—Vallöby Grave; showing the natural eminence, with arrangement of stones, cist, and mound.

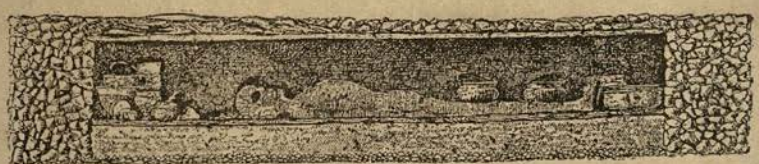


Fig. 531.—Horizontal view; showing how the objects were placed. Coffin proper, 9 feet long, 2 feet deep.

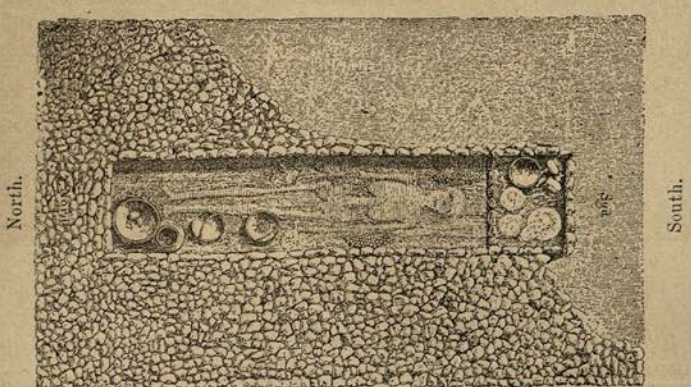


Fig. 532.—Bird's-eye view of grave, seen from above. Length of outer inclosure between 11 and 12 feet; height about 2 feet; width about 2½ feet.

bronze vessels; and the Northern, by the silver cups and black clay vessels, &c., &c.

The grave was made with especial care, and was sunk about six feet below the natural surface of the bank; the stone inclosure was built of rounded stones, of the size of a man's fist, placed together with great regularity.[1]

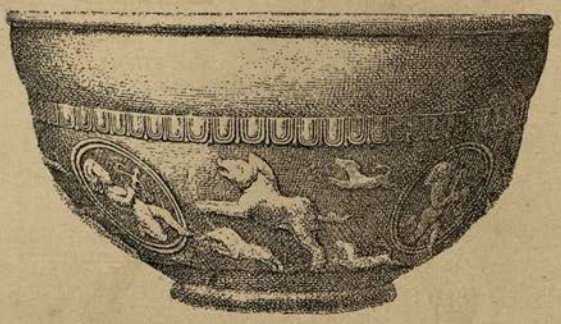


Fig. 533.—Samian Clay Bowl. Hunting scenes in bas-relief. Inscription ("Cos. L. Viri—") partially defaced. $\frac{3}{5}$ real size.

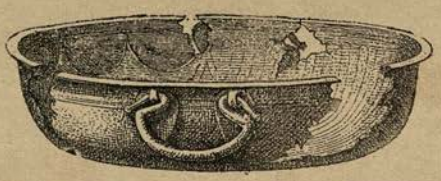


Fig. 534.—One of two flat bronze bowls. In the earth above were two small silver knobs, one covering the other, the use of which is unknown. $\frac{1}{5}$ real size.

Fig. 535.—Fluted bowl of bronze. $\frac{1}{5}$ real size.

[1] In the coffin itself, on the right side of the skeleton, were found, among other objects, forty-six checker pieces of glass, sixteen dark red, the others of whitish colour, $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch; three finger-rings of gold, and a spiral bracelet, similar to the one from Öland (vol. ii., p. 311); two fibulæ of silver, one gilt. On the left, sixty checker pieces, thirty-one of which were black, the others whitish; with these was a small amethyst stone with rough, unworked surface. At the feet, bronze vessels, one placed on the other, two small bosses of silver of unknown use.

Fig. 536.—$\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

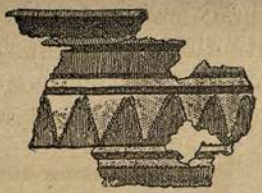


Fig. 537.—$\frac{2}{3}$ real size.

Fragments of bronze kettle.

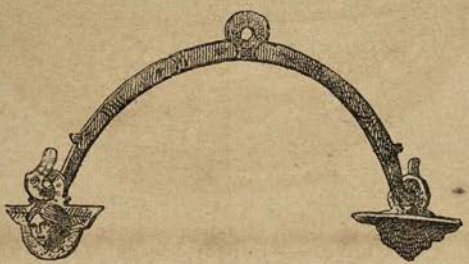


Fig. 538.—Kettle handle. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 539.—Side view. Fig. 540.—Front view.
Handle of kettle. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size.

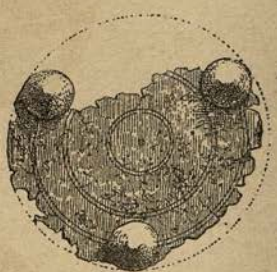


Fig. 541.—Bottom of bronze kettle. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 542.—Side view of bottom of kettle. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Bavenhöi Grave Find.—At Bavenhöi, in Himlingöi, Zeeland, is a large bank of gravel, of slight elevation, only about 200 to 230 feet in length. This had evidently been used as

a common cemetery, as the bodies were found deposited in the earth without a coffin, though partly surrounded by stone settings. The antiquities found at various times with the skeletons seem to belong to the latter part, or perhaps the middle, of the early iron age.

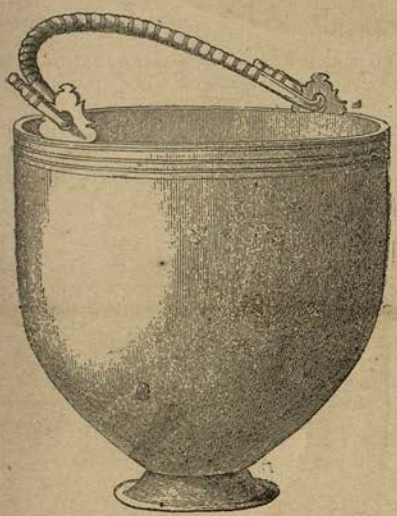


Fig. 543.—Bronze vase. ¼ real size.

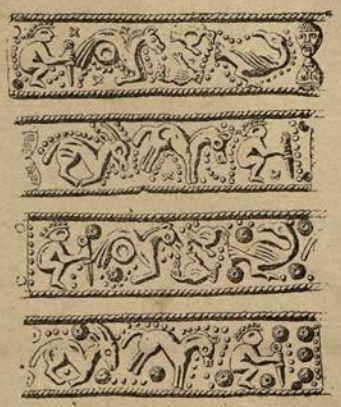


Fig. 544.—Border of silver goblet; plaqué with gold and ornamented with figures in relief—viz., a double head with moustaches and helmets; a helmeted man crouching, with a dagger in his hand; two quadrupeds with manes; a horned animal; and three birds. Between the figures are dots, circles, and crosses.

Fig. 545.—Silver cup. ½ real size.

Fig. 546.—Silver goblet, with repoussé work of silver plated with gold; similar to the Vallöby one. ½ real size.

BAVENHÖI GRAVE FIND.

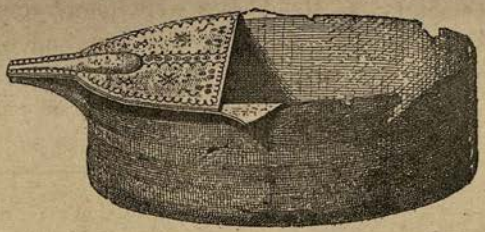


Fig. 547.—Flat basin or stewpan of bronze, containing two goblets of silver, &c. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

Fig. 548.—Bronze pail. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.

Fig. 549.—Bronze vase, $\frac{1}{4}$ real size, with border upon which are engraved hunting scenes, a lion, two horses, a tiger or leopard, and two bucks, a dog and two deer; these animals are separated by trees and plants, the leaves of which, to judge from some traces, must have been silvered over.

Fig. 550.—Part of the design round the border of vase, representing hunting scene. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

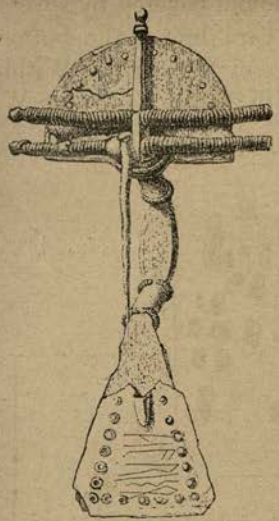


Fig. 551.—Bronze fibula covered with gold, with an inscription scratched in earlier runes. ⅔ real size.

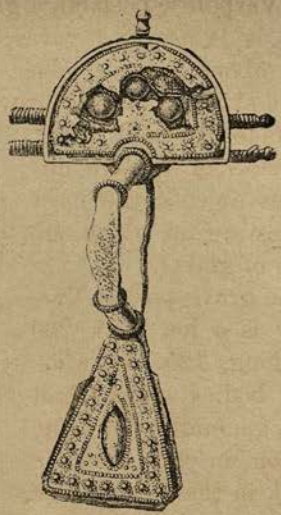


Fig. 552.—Bronze fibula plated with embossed gold ornamented with 3 blue glass knobs and an oval piece of glass of the same colour. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 553.—Fibula from Storeheddinge, Zeeland, showing the part missing in the one above. ⅔ real size.

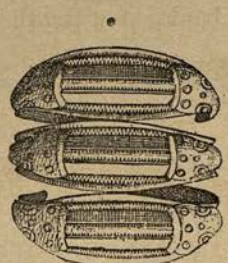


Fig. 554.—Gold ring of three spirals flattened and ornamented with heads of animals, found still adhering to the bone of the hand. Real size.

At Varpelev, Zeeland, a grave was found covered by several slabs; it is nearly 4 yards long, $1\frac{3}{4}$ yard broad, the bottom being about 3 yards under the surface of the earth. Within lay the skeleton of a full-grown man, with its head to the S.S.W., and its feet to the N.N.E.; alongside of it were numerous objects, the most interesting of which are those of glass.[1]

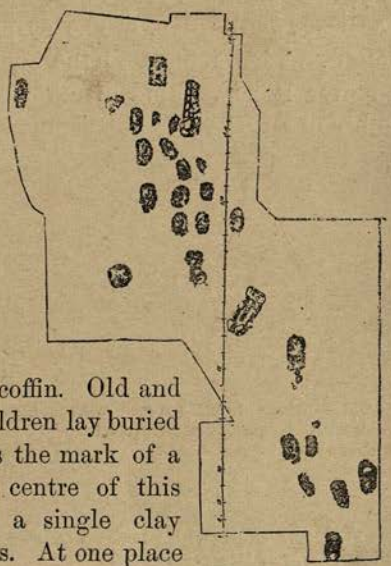


Fig. 555.—Ground plan of the Graveyard at Varpelev.

The grave-yard at Varpelev is a low bank 200 feet long, 125 feet wide. The bodies were laid down, generally, in a bent position in the sand or gravel, in their clothes or grave-dress, but without a coffin. Old and young men, women and children lay buried here, and one corpse bears the mark of a heavy sword-cut. In the centre of this skeleton graveyard stood a single clay urn, containing burnt bones. At one place there was a bed made of paved stones burnt and smoked, which had evidently been used as a pyre.

The richest grave was situated under the highest point of the bank, at a depth of 9 feet under the surface; it was

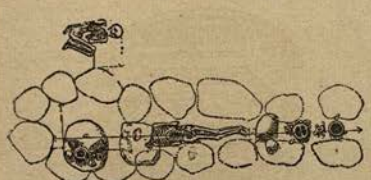


Fig. 556.

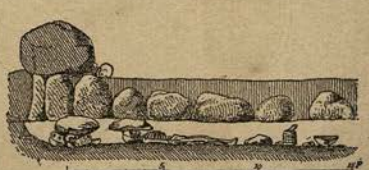


Fig. 557

Grave at Varpelev.

made in the gravel, and was surrounded by sixteen rough stones of different size and shape. The majority were 2 feet

[1] See also pages 280, 282, 284.

in diameter; the large stone at the head measured 3 feet in length and width, and was 2 feet thick. The interstices were filled up with blue clay. A large slab, 2 feet long, 1½ feet broad, and 8 inches thick, was laid on the head, which like the rest of the bones was much decomposed, and proved to be that of a heavy-built man. The corpse lay on its back, nearly straight, with its head to the south-west; it had originally had over it some kind of covering, as there are remains of clothes or a grave-dress.

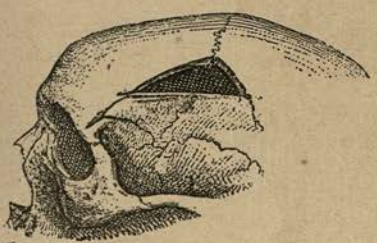


Fig. 558.—Skull (with sword-cut ?), Varpelev Grave. ⅔ real size.

Fig. 559.—Skeleton of man; above the head two large stones. Varpelev. 1877.

Fig. 560.—½ real size.

Fig. 561.—Real size.

Two silver buckles: one found near the middle of the corpse, one near the head.

Fig. 562.—Real size.

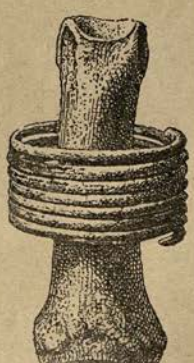


Fig. 563.—Real size.

Gold rings found on finger bones.

VARPELEV GRAVE FIND.

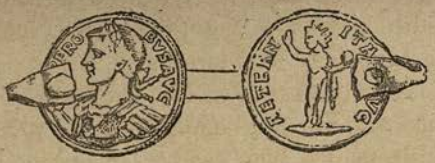


Fig. 564. Fig. 565.

Roman Coin of Probus, 276–82; found lying by right ear of corpse. Real size.

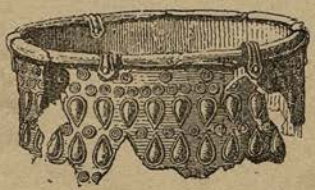


Fig. 566.—Fragment of thin ornamented silver plating, probably the mounting of a drinking-horn. ½ real size.

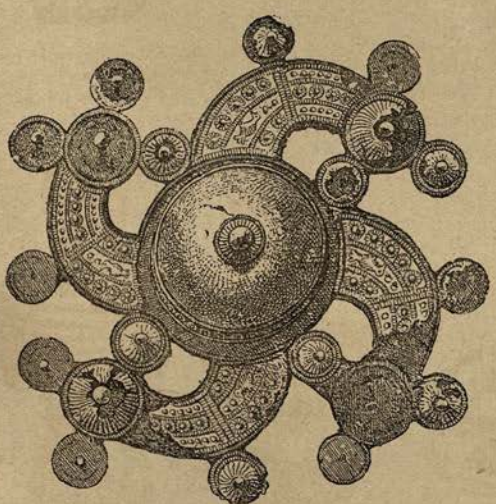


Fig. 567.—Fibula of silver, *svastica* shape, plated with gold, with amber knob in the centre; beautiful small birds may be noticed on each arm; found in a woman's grave. ½ real size.

Fig. 568.—Hair-pin of gold, top ornamented with garnet; found in a woman's grave. ⅔ real size.

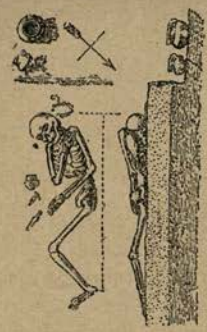


Fig. 569.—Skeleton of woman.

Fig. 570.—Skeleton lying on its left side, with an iron knife near the hands.

Fig. 571.

Fig. 572.

Fig. 573.
Skull, seen from three sides.

VARPELEV GRAVE FIND.

CHAPTER XV.

GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES IN THE NORTH.

Similar antiquities in the North and in Southern Russia—Roman coins—The trade of Gotland in earlier times—Ornaments and other objects of bronze.

Among the archæological wealth of the North still belonging to the earlier, but not earliest, iron age, we find a class of graves and antiquities which are of special importance, for they help us to fix very closely a date for the period to which they belong, and for this light we are indebted to Roman coins and other objects, both Roman and Greek, which these graves contain.

Many of the finds of this period are most interesting, as showing the taste of the people in the North, and a wealth and civilisation of which we were not aware. They are the more valuable because we see from them the wide extent of the maritime expeditions and overland trading journeys of the people towards the beginning of the Christian era. They show, as has already been pointed out, the intercourse which the people of the North had with those of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and also with the newly-acquired north-western provinces of the Roman empire (Gaul, Britain, and Frisia). But, what is still more important, they help to prove the general truthfulness of the earlier Edda and Sagas, for they show that the Asar, or whoever the emigrants were, who came north, and who were said to have brought their civilisation with them and to have given it to the people there, were either related to or on intimate relations with the people who inhabited the shores of the Black Sea; for many of the antiquities which were claimed to be of a peculiar northern origin are identical with those found there; while similar

ornaments of unmistakable Greek origin are found in both regions. To complete the chain of proof, many of the antiquities, both in the Museums of Kief and Smolensk, are similar to those of the North.

Many of the forms of the antiquities, such as neck-rings and gold snake-shaped bracelets, fibulæ, &c., which were thought to belong exclusively to the North, are found in great number in the graves of Kertch, in Southern Russia, where they lie almost side by side with the exquisite Grecian antiquities—the pride of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg—mementos of the colonies established by Greece on the shores of the Black Sea. They show that at that period there were two distinct civilisations and peoples living near each other—one Greek, the other native. The natives were probably of the same stock as a great number of the people of the North.

Western and Eastern, Roman and Byzantine, coins have been found; the gold solidi were for the most part used by the people in the North as ornaments, for loops have been attached to or holes made through them. The two largest discoveries hitherto made of Roman coins are those of Hagestaborg, in Scania, southern Sweden (550 denarii), found in 1871, and of Sindarfe (Hemse parish), Gotland, at which latter spot about 1,500 Roman coins were found, in 1870, in a clay urn.[1] Few coins dating before the Christian era have been found.

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[1] The earliest coins (Gotland) are those of Augustus (29 B.C. A.D. 14). Then follow those of Nero, and coins of all the different emperors to Alexander Severus (222–235); the greatest numbers are those of Trajan (98–117); Hadrian (117–138); Antoninus Pius (138–161); Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius (161–180); Faustina junior, wife of Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus (180–192). At Hagestaborg the most numerous were those of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Faustina the younger, and Commodus. The earliest are of the time of Nero (54–68), the latest of that of Septimius Severus (193–211. In Öland the earliest are those of Trajan, the latest those of Alexander Severus. In Zeeland the earliest are of Vespasian, the latest of Macrinus (217, 218). In Fyen the earliest are of Tiberius (14–37), the latest of Geta (211, 212). In Bornholm the earliest are of Nero, the latest of Septimius Severus. In Jutland the earliest are also of Nero, the latest of Macrinus (217, 218). In southern Sweden the earliest are of Claudius (41–54), the latest of Alexander Severus, but only one or two of the latter have been found; after the time of Commodus the silver denarii became rarer and rarer. On the island of Fyen a complete series of gold coins from Decius (249–251) to Licinius the elder (307–323) have been found. The Byzantine coins are of gold, and chiefly used as ornaments, date from Constantinus Magnus (306–337) to Anastasius (491–518); one also of Justinius I. (518–527) has been found. In Norway the gold coins of the above period

The people had to learn that these coins had an intrinsic value, and that with them they could buy goods. In every country where barter takes place it has taken a certain, sometimes a great, number of years for the people to learn this value.[1] The fact that the earlier coins are rare does not conclusively prove that intercourse between the North and the Western parts of Europe had not taken place before that time.

Judging from the extensive hoards of coins discovered, it is not improbable that they were kept for some opportune time when their need would be required, such as for purchases when travelling back to the Western or Eastern Roman provinces. That the people were well acquainted with the value of these coins is beyond dispute, for otherwise they would not have kept them.

We must remember that human nature is and always has been the same; there were misers in those early days as there are now. The Sagas give us some examples of the practice of hoarding, and the probability is that some of the hoards found may have been collected during the lifetime of one or more persons. But the numbers found, in hoards or otherwise, even without those which remain undiscovered, show the existence of commercial intercourse.

One of the countries of whose earlier history we know nothing, except that it is mentioned here and there in the Sagas, is the island of Gotland; but from the finds, which are especially rich in coins, we are led to the conclusion that it was a great emporium of trade at least from the beginning of the Christian era to the twelfth century. Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, and earlier English coins are found in far greater num-

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are exceedingly rare, only one of Valens (364–378) and one of Gratuanus (367–375) having been discovered; also one of Tiberius Constantius (578–582), one of Mauricius Tiberius (582–602), one of Constantius V. Copronymus (741–775), one of Michæl III. (842–867)—all of gold. Some of the earlier Arabic coins had already made their appearance in Scandinavia. The Roman coins from the Bangstrup find date from between A.D. 249 and 361. See also Appendix.

[1] I have myself seen an illustration of this on the African coast, where natives could not understand that coins represent the value of goods, though traders had come to their country for a long time, and in some places they were loth to take money as payment, while a few miles inland it was refused.

bers than in all the Scandinavian lands together. Of the latter, those of Ethelred are even more numerous than in England itself. Situated in a sea whose shores at that period seem to have been inhabited by a dense population, Gotland appears to have occupied the position of commercial supremacy which England holds in Europe today.

We have historical evidence of its being a great emporium of trade as late as the fourteenth century, until Wisby, its chief town, was destroyed by the Danes. Its magnificent towers, walls, and ruined churches still bear witness to its past greatness.[1]

From the time of Alexander Severus (A.D. 235) to Theodosius (A.D. 395), which comprises a period of 160 years, the coins become very scarce, and Roman gold coins take the place of

[1] See "Land of the Midnight Sun." The islands of Zeeland and Fyen are especially rich in Roman objects and show the existence of great intercourse with the Roman provinces; while Gotland is particularly rich in coins. In the hamlet of Ryk (Tanum parish), Bohuslän, a Roman coin struck A.D. 179 for the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was found in the ground. From the inscription on the coin the date can be accurately fixed, for it was said that it was coined in the year when Marcus Aurelius was Tribune for the thirty-third time, Imperator for the tenth time, and Consul for the third time.

A gold coin of Tiberius (14–37) was found in a stone-set coffin at Rorbœk; a silver denarius of Nerva (96–98) in the find of Fraugdegard, Fyen; and a silver denarius of Antoninus Pius (138–161), with a skeleton, in a natural hill at Bennebo, near Holbœk; a silver denarius of Lucius Verus (161–169), with a skeleton, in a hill at Gunnerugs, near Prestö; a barbaric imitation in gold of a Roman imperial coin, with a loop soldered to it, found with a skeleton at Aareslen in Odense amt, Fyen. One limit of time obtained by means of the coins is certain enough, for the graves cannot have been closed before the year of their coinage.

Pyteas mentions Guttanæ. The Gotlanders in the Sagas are called Gutar; they may have met him on some of their trading journeys. The two names seem to be sufficiently similar to make this a probable supposition. In the island of Gotland a Greek coin of copper was found, but it seems to have been struck at Panormus in Sicily. On the obverse is a female head looking to the right, on the reverse a horse galloping to the left; it has no Punic letters. (In the collection of Capt. C. T. von Braun, of Ystad.) Two Macedonian coins of silver were also found; one of them is a diabole of Philip II., similar to the coins described in Müller, "Der Macedoniske Konge Philipp II.'s Mynter," p. 3, Nos. 14–16, and engraved Plate 1. (Both were in the collection of Capt. v. Braun, of Ystad; now only one remains there.)

Also Roman coins anterior to Augustus, found together about 100 years ago. A silver coin of the family of Lucretia; a silver coin of the family of Nævia; a coin of the family of Sulpicia. They are all unusually well preserved, but shorn on the border. (In the collection of Capt. von Braun, Ystad.) A silver coin of the family Funa; a silver coin of the family Poblicia; one subærate coin of the family Postumia; one silver coin of the family Procilia; a silver coin of the family Tituria; a silver coin of the family Veturia. (In the collection of Capt. von Braun.) A silver coin of the family Nævia, given by Capt. Braun to the Museum at Uddevala; and a silver coin of the family Sicinia, both well preserved. (In the Wisby Museum; formerly in the collection of Mr. P. A. Save.)

silver.[1] From the finds we see that this period in the North becomes exceedingly rich in gold jewels, and it seems probable that the people preferred gold coins to those of silver.

The North is particularly rich in finds of bronze vessels, which appear to be more specially of Greek, or some perhaps of Roman manufacture; the scarcity of them in Britain and Gaul would imply that they are chiefly of Greek origin; they seem to have been highly prized by the people.

Near the fishing village of Abekås, Southern Scania,

Fig. 574.—Bronze vessel, $\frac{1}{5}$ real size, containing burnt bones, ring armour, coat of mail, dipper of bronze with a sieve belonging to it, two glass tumblers, &c., under a stone slab buried in the ground.

in Jutland, a dipper has been found with the name of the Roman manufacturer on it, and the words "P. CIPI POLIBI." Another, with a name on it, was also found in Helsingland, Sweden.

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[1] Three hundred and forty-four silver denarii, coined by the emperors between Nero and Marcus Aurelius, among them many of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, have been found at the mouth of the Elbe.

Under a large stone on a bank at Sengerich, in Hanover, 1,100 silver denarii were dug up, coined between the years 96 and 211.

In Mecklenburg the finds of imperial coins embrace the period from Augustus to Valentinian.

Finds of Roman coins from the first two centuries after Christ have also been made at the mouth of the Vistula and in its lower course, near the Oder.

An especially interesting discovery was that of a Greek denarius coined in Lycia by Trajan; the only Greek coin discovered in Hanover.

Fig. 575.—Piece of the coat of mail. Real size. Oremölla.

Fig. 576.—Vessel of glass. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Oremölla.

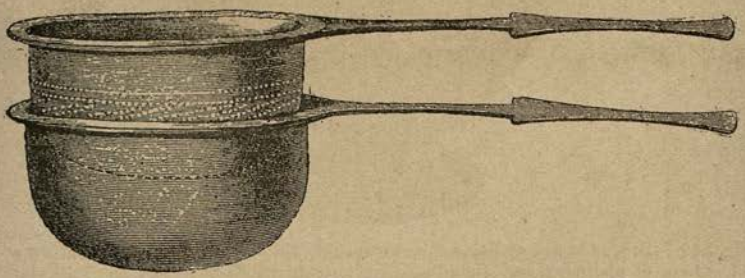


Fig. 577.—Dipper of bronze, with sieve. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Oremölla.

Fig. 578.—Urn. $\frac{2}{5}$ real size. Oremölla.

Fig. 579.—Bronze vessel of Roman workmanship, containing burnt bones, and a few pieces of melted glass. Height, 18 inches. Inscribed on it are the following words in silver:[1] "Apollini Granno donvm Ammillivs Constans præfectvs templi ipsivs votvm solvit libentissimo merito." Mound, Fycklinge, Vestmanland, Sweden. ⅓ real size.

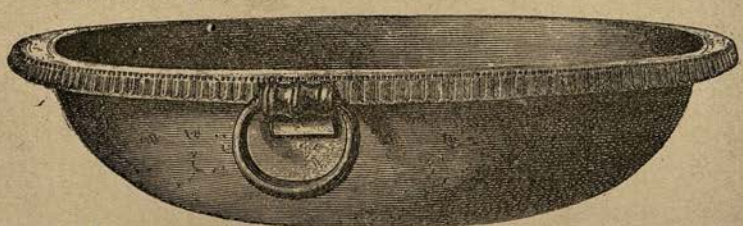


Fig. 580.—Roman bowl of bronze, found, with several antiquities, under a slab at Sojvide, Gotland.

[1] Apollo Grannus, to whose temple the vase once belonged, was worshipped by the tribes of Gaul and Belgium. The Roman historian Dio Cassius relates that he was one of the gods worshipped by the Emperor Caracalla, who was murdered in A.D. 217. The name has also been discovered in Transylvania on a stone which Quintus Axius Ælianus, Governor of Dacia at the beginning of the second century, had cut. It, however, happens that this Ælianus had before this resided in Belgium, whither he had probably brought with him the worship of the god.

Fig. 581.—Ornament of a large bronze vase, with hole for the handle; found when ploughing. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Öland.

Fig. 582.—Handle of a Roman bronze vase. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Öland.

Fig. 583.—Bronze vessel, $\frac{1}{5}$ real size, with burnt bones, in a tumulus, with two bronze spurs exactly alike, a bent double-edged sword, a spear-head damaged purposely, lying over the kettle, another larger spear-head well preserved, &c. Norway.

Fig. 584.—Restored bronze vase, containing ashes and bones, length $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, encircled by glittering stones and inlaid with silver. Angvaldnœs, Karmoen, Norway.

Fig. 585.—Bronze statuette,[1] representing Juno. ½ real size. Ösby, Gräsgard parish, Öland.

Fig. 586.—Silver vase. ¾ real size. Byrsted, Aalborg amt, North Jutland.

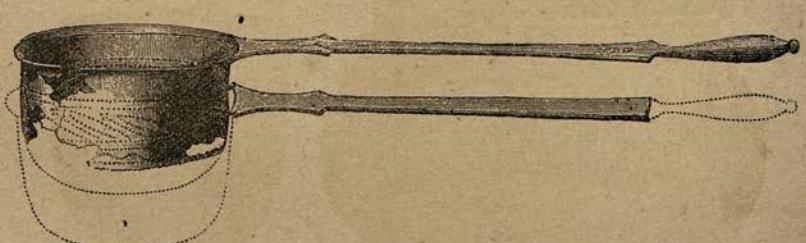


Fig. 587.—Sieve of bronze, ¼ real size, found with ornaments of bronze and a drinking horn, a gold charm, two gold rings, and a small gold button found in a sepulchral chamber of little over 4 yards in length, and about 2 feet 3 inches wide. Norway.

Fig. 588.—Handle of the sieve. Real size.

[1] More than forty different statuettes have been found.

Fig. 589.—Ornament of a bronze vase, ⅔ real size, found in a tumulus. Norway.

Fig. 590.—Ornament of bronze. ½ real size. Norway.

Fig. 591.—Bronze vessel from Mosbœk bog. Jutland.

Fig. 592.—Fragments of a bronze chain, probably part of riding gear. ¼ real size. Bog, Karby on Mors.

Fig. 593.—Head at fastening of the handle of the bronze vessel.

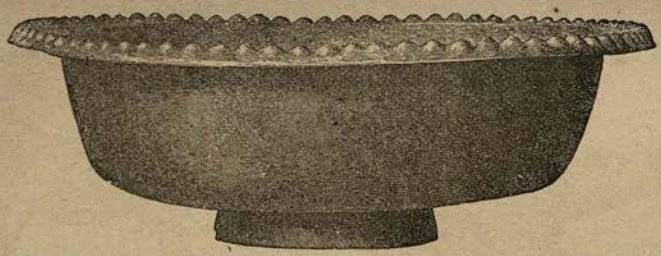


Fig. 594.—Bronze basin, over a kettle containing burnt bones, ¼ real size, in round tumulus, inside a little stone cist built of slabs; with it also were a bronze kettle and a glass cup. Norway.

Fig. 595.—Bronze vase containing burnt bones, wrapped in a dark green woollen cloth with greenish and yellow stripes, fastened with a fibula of silver. In the chamber were a pair of shears and other objects. Ringkjobing amt, Jutland.

Fig. 596.—Vase, ¼ real size, found in a round mound, Vang, Hdm., Norway, with fragments of another bronze vessel of the same size, but of a somewhat different form. It has on it the inscription "LIBERTINVS. ET. APRVS. CVRATOR [ES. POS] VERVNT." Originally it must have belonged to a Roman temple of one of the northern provinces of the empire, and was offered to this temple by two of the administrators (curatores) named above. The shape of the letters leads to the conclusion that the vase belongs to the first century of our era.

Fig. 597.—Bronze bucket of Roman make, $\frac{1}{3}$ real size, found in a round mound, Norway, together with a spear of iron and other objects of the same metal, but these were so decayed as to be undistinguishable.

Fig. 598.—Bronze vessel about 10 inches high. Angvaldnœs mound, Norway.

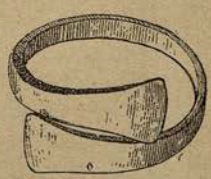


Fig. 599.—Flat finger-ring of silver and alloyed gold, real size, found together with fragments of Roman or Greek bronze vessels, four small beads of greenish glass, and two bronze fibulæ, in a mound, Hjörring, Jutland.

Fig. 600.—Bronze ring, real size, with Latin inscription, "Divo Trajano Parth. Avg. Patri." Holbæk, Denmark.

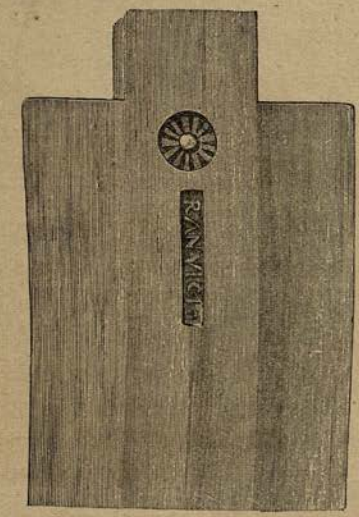


Fig. 601.—Part of bent sword, real size, showing inscription in Latin "RANVICI," probably a name, and above it a stamp, probably constituting the trade-mark of its maker.—Similar swords have been found at other places in the North, in the Nydam and Vimose bogs.

Fig. 602. — Bent sword, ¼ real size, found in a mound at Einang, Kristians Amt, Norway, on a layer of charcoal and burnt bones.

Fig. 603.—Bronze vessel, of Roman manufacture, mound 48 to 50 feet diameter, 6 feet high, found in a mound at Harf, Meldelpad, Sweden, above a slab, filled with burnt bones, an iron spear-point, fibula of bronze, fragments of clay urns, &c. ¼ real size.

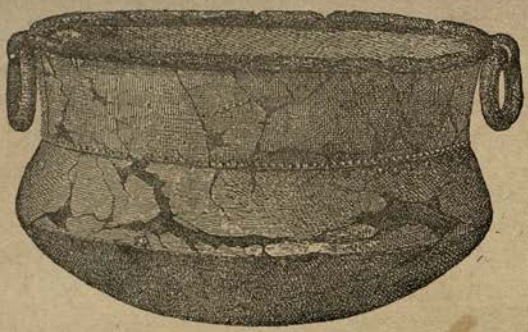


Fig. 604.—Bronze kettle, $\frac{1}{6}$ real size, Brokær, Ribe, Jutland; found with fragments of Roman bronze vessels; and of two massive coats of mail; fragments of artistically woven cloth; double-edged sword with scabbard; comb, fragments of checkers, oblong dice of bone, and fragments of a silver drinking-horn, &c.

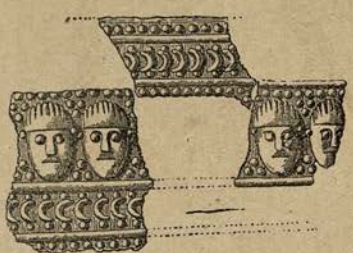


Fig. 605.—Ornaments of silver for drinking-horn, Brokær, Ribe, Jutland. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size.

On the farm of Brottby, Ösby, Upland, a grave-mound of about 150 feet in circumference and 13 feet in height was found. The mound, the exterior of which was of earth, covered a cairn, in which was found a stone burial chamber enclosing a clay urn. The upper part contained bones, which were entirely unburnt, below which were pieces of the skull, also unburnt.[1]

[1] Among the bones outside the urn were found various fragments of bronze, six clinch-nails of iron, remains of glass, a burnt oblong loaf of bread, two pieces of a head ornament of bronze with rivets of iron, a ring of bronze, twelve beads of glass of different size and appearance, a damaged hanging ornament of bronze, a square plate of bronze with iron rivets, a denarius of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius coined in A.D. 162.

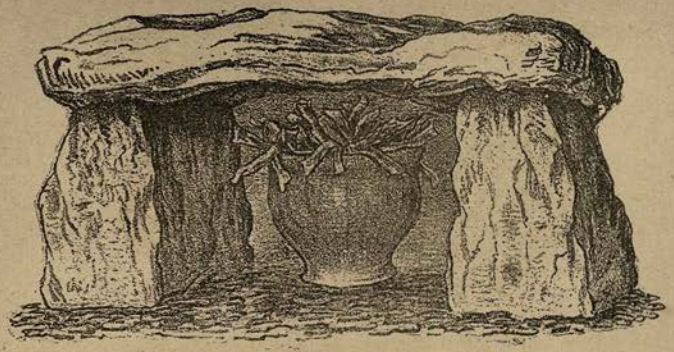


Fig. 606.—Grave-chamber found at Bröttby, Upland.

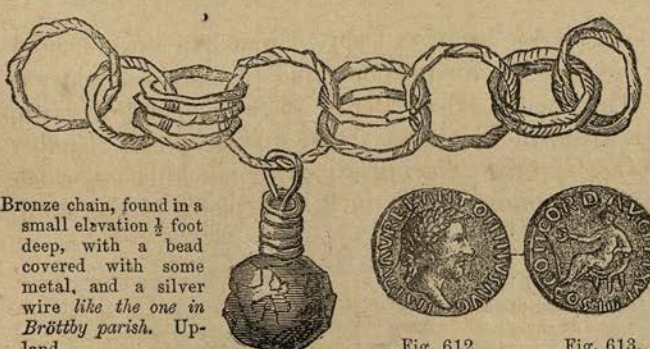
Fig. 607.—A buckle of bronze found with an iron needle. Bröttby.

Fig. 608.

Fig. 609.

Fig. 610.

Glass beads, of pale red colour, with white flowers with light and dark-green leaves; one is fastened to a silver wire. Of the twelve beads, three are represented here. Bröttby.



Bronze chain, found in a small elevation ½ foot deep, with a bead covered with some metal, and a silver wire *like the one in Bröttby parish.* Upland.

Fig. 611.

Fig. 612. Fig. 613.

Denarius of Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 162. Bröttby.

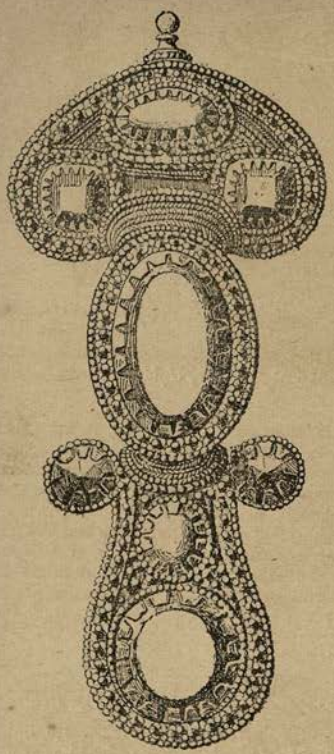


Fig. 614.—Fibula of gold, ornamented with eight garnets. Aareslev, Fyen. Real size.

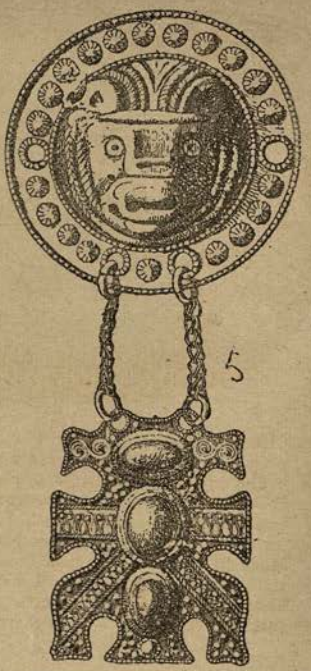


Fig. 615.—Fibula with hanging ornament of gold, real size, representing a lion's head; the filagree work is ornamented with garnets, found with another large silver fibula, a crystal ball, a vase of bronze, an imitation of a Roman coin, &c. Aareslev, Fyen.

Fig. 616.—The crystal ball with Greek inscription found near a skeleton with hanging ornaments, &c. Aareslev, Fyen. Real size.

Fig. 617.—Part of a belt buckle, silver gilt. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

AARESLEV FIND.

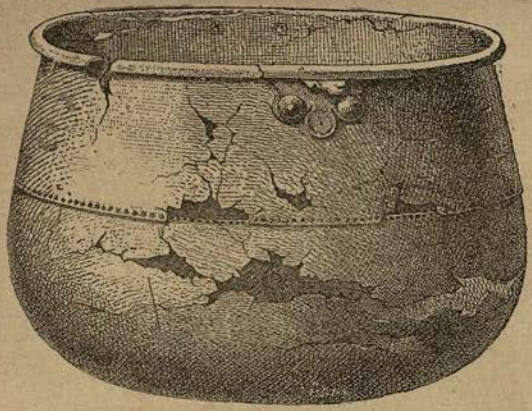


Fig. 619.—Bronze ornament, real size, found with kettle. Möllegaard, Broholm.

Fig. 618.—Bronze vessel, $\frac{1}{5}$ real size, so brittle, that only by covering it all around with clay could it be moved away. It is made of two parts joined together in the middle with small flat rivets of bronze, and contained six quarts of burnt bones, among which were seventeen human teeth, different articles of iron and bronze, which had been packed in apparently coarse linen, small fragments of which only remained; a bronze mounting for a drinking-horn, and different kinds of iron knives; iron mounting for a knife-handle, remains of two iron awls, an iron key, two small melted lumps of silver, remains of about thirty-two bone needles, a glass bead with green ground and yellow stripes, remains of four earthen vessels, &c. Möllegaard, Broholm.

Fig. 620. Fig. 621.

Byzantine gold coins, fifth century, Libius Severus and Leo, found in Björnhofda, Öland, with thirty-three other coins of the same century. Real size.

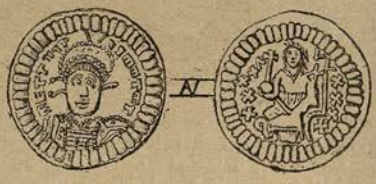


Fig. 622. Fig. 623.

Barbaric imitation of Byzantine coin of the fifth century. Real size. Mallgards, Gotland.

Fig. 624. Fig. 625.

Antonini Pii.

Fig. 626. Fig. 627.

Faustina the younger.

CHAPTER XVI.

GLASS.

Vessels with painted figures—Vessels with Greek letters—Drinking-horns of glass—Cut glass.

NOTHING perhaps can give us a better idea of the refined taste of some of the Northmen than the beautiful glass objects which have been found in different parts of the country. Many of these are evidently of Greek, some perhaps of Roman,

Fig. 628.—2½ inches high; diameter across top, 3 inches; across bottom, 1 7/10ths of an inch. A blue panther, with grey or brown contours and dots, attacks a brown stag; on the other side of which is a brown lioness. Between the animals are circles of dots, brown and yellow by turns, with a brown spot in their middle.

Fig. 629.—3½ inches high; 3 3/10th inches diameter. A brown bull, with a blue band with brown dots, attacks a brown bear. To the left a man in yellow coat and green breeches, holding a whip in one hand, in the other a blue shield; to the right a stag, being torn by a lion, both brown.

These two vessels were found in a field, Nordrup, Zeeland, in a grave 3 feet 4 inches under the ground. It contained a skeleton, and, besides the two vessels, a Roman bronze vessel and bronze sieve, a gold finger-ring, a silver fibula, forty-one beads of glass and glass mosaic, a clay vessel, and fragments of two clay vessels.

origin. In the museums of Italy, Greece, or Russia no such exquisite bowls are found, which after having been painted they seem to have been baked or subjected to heat in order that they might retain their colour.

Glass, as we have seen, has been found in the later bronze

Fig. 630.—4 inches high, 3¾ inches in diameter across top. In a mound, Viborg amt, Jutland.

ΠΙΕΖΗCΑΙCΚΑΛΩC

Fig. 631.—Fragment of glass vessel, with gladiator and shield of blue tint, the gloves and shoulders are brown. Arm and legs of the other gladiator flesh colour.—Thorslunde.

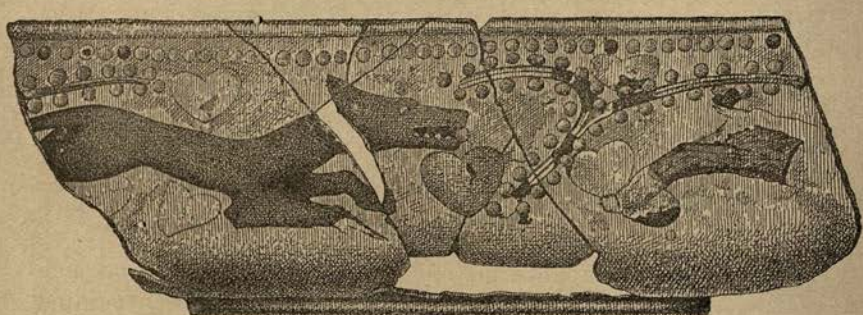


Fig. 632.—Fragments of glass bowl found in a grave by Thorslunde, Fyen. ⅔ real size. The wolf is greyish upon light yellow ground. The arm and legs are of a brown tint, the dots yellow and brown. These lay alongside remains of skeletons which seem to have been buried in sitting posture; some of the designs are raised.

age: the ancient name for *amber* in the North was *gler*,[1] which was well known by the stone age people; but we are aware that glass was unknown to them.

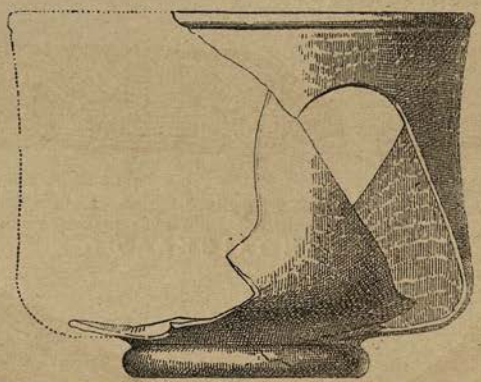


Fig. 633.—Fragment of a glass bowl of a green tint, ⅔ real size, found in a grave mound by Thorslunde.

Fig. 634.

Fig. 635.

Fig. 636.

Fig. 637.

Fig. 638.

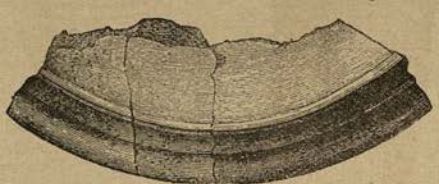


Fig. 639.
Border of the vase.

Fig. 640.

Besides the glass vessels of Roman or Greek workmanship

[1] The word amber occurs in three earlier poems. Magical runes were written on gler.—Sigrdrifumal. Pliny in his 'Natural History,' Book xxxv. 3, 42, speaks of amber as being "formed in the islands of the Northern Ocean."

others of inferior quality, as is the case in every country, have been found; some of these, which are generally of a bluish green, yellow or white tint, are cut, some ornamented with thread patterns in relief.

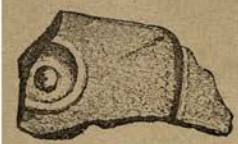


Fig. 641.

Fig. 642.

Fragments of what must have been a magnificent glass vase of a dark blue colour; the figures in relief are of an opaque white and represented most probably some mythological subject. Sölberg, Lower Eker, Norway.

Fig. 643.—Glass drinking-horn. Norway.

Fig 644.—Thin greenish glass vessel, open at both ends. ¼ real size. Varpelev.

Fig. 645.—Amethyst-coloured glass bowl. ¼ real size. Varpelev.

Fig. 646.—Glass drinking-horn, length 8 inches, diameter of mouth 2½ inches· very rare in the North. ¼ real size. Bavenhöi.

Fig. 647.—Vessel or goblet of greenish glass, ornamented with fillets. ¼ real size. Bavenhöi.

Fig. 648.—Glass vessel. ⅓ real size. With white and blue ornamented threads, found with beads, and bronze pans and sieves, in a woman's skeleton grave. Ringsted, Zeeland.

Glass with thread-like lines have been found in a stone coffin, Roman, near Dusseldorf.

Fig. 649.—Dark blue glass bowl mounted with silver, on which was inscription in Greek letters, ЄΥΤΥΧΩϹ (with good luck). ½ real size. Above the head of the skeleton in the grave, but more or less damaged by the large stone, were at least six glass vessels and fragments of clay urns. Varpelev.

Fig. 650.—Vessel of greenish white glass with representations of various animals, found broken in many pieces. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Bavenhöi.

Fig. 651.—Animals represented on this glass vessel. Lion, yellow and brown; bear, dark brown with light yellow outlines; animal with fore part of body missing, probably an ox. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Bavenhöi.

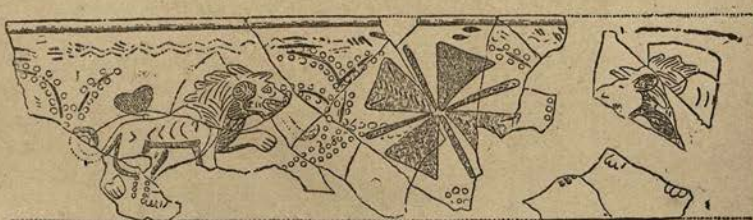


Fig. 652.—Portion of glass vessel, much damaged. $\frac{1}{2}$ real size. Two lions, light yellow, blue outlines, a double cross in the middle. Bavenhöi.[1]

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[1] For other objects in Bavenhöi find, see pp. 252–254.

Fig. 653.—Vessel of whitish green glass, ornamented in various colours which have been burnt on the vessel itself. The colour of the four letters D.V.B.P. represented on the cup has been destroyed by the effects of time, as has also that of the beak, wings and legs of the bird. This, however, perfectly resembles the bird on the opposite side of the cup, which is better preserved, and on which the wing is light yellow with dark brownish outlines, the beak and legs red. ⅔ real size. Varpelev.[1]

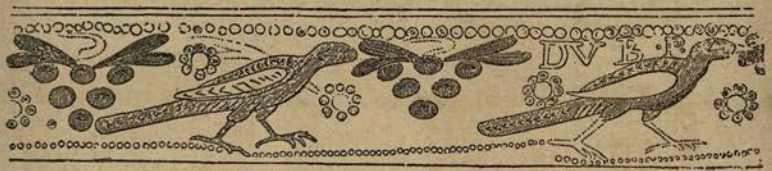

Fig. 654.—General design of vase. ⅔ real size.

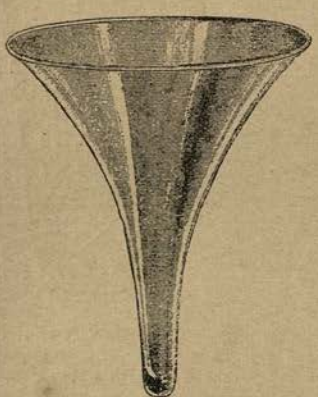

Fig. 655.—Glass cup, funnel shape. Bjorko, Södermanland.

Fig. 656.—Glass cup, ¼ real size, found in a round tumulus, with a large bronze vase with two arms, the bronze ornamentation of a wooden bucket, &c., &c. Norway.

[1] For other objects found at Varpelev, see pp. 256–258.

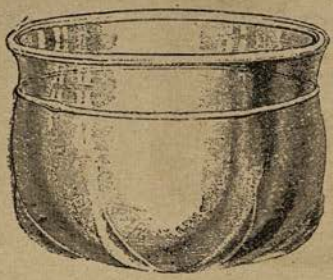

Fig. 657.—Glass vessel. ½ real size. Norway.

Fig. 658.—Glass vessel. ¼ real size. Norway.

Fig. 659.—Found deep in a stone circle. The cup or glass covered an urn of clay with burnt bones and some glass beads, etc. ½ real size. Upland.

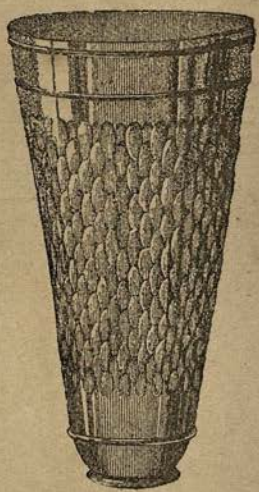

Fig. 661.—Glass vessel found in a stone cist containing a skeleton, with a clay vessel, an iron knife, and bronze mounting for two drinking-horns. ⅓ real size. Gotland.

Fig. 660.—In a stone cist, with a skeleton some arrow-heads of bone, and a clay urn, etc., etc. ¼ real size. Oland.

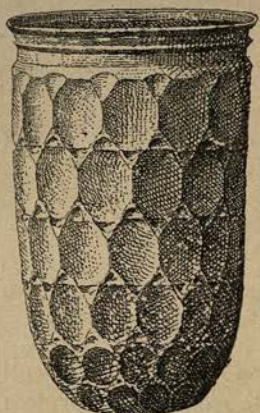

Fig. 662.—Tumbler of thick green glass. ½ real size. Varpelev.

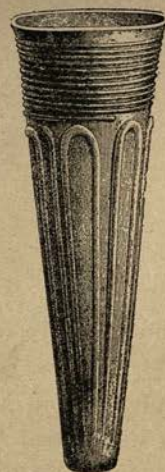

Fig. 663. — Glass vessel found in a mound with unburnt skeleton. Norway.

CHAPTER XVII.

HORSES—WAGGONS.

Favourite colours of horses—Splendour of the harness—Iron and bronze bits—Spurs—Bridles.

We have ample proof from the Sagas that the people of the North were great breeders of horses, and took pride in their adornment. We are told of the favourite colours of horses, and the finds bear witness to the gorgeousness of their harness and trappings.

"Stein was for a while with King Knút, and was conspicuous for his weapons and clothes, and was called Stein the Proud. Old and wise men have told how Stein was so haughty that he had his horse shod with gold, and the hoof above adorned. King Knut thought Stein vied with him in magnificence, and therefore Stein left him" (Fms. v. 181).

"King Adils liked good horses very much, he had the best horses at that time. One of his horses was called *Slöngvir* (the flinging one), and another *Hrafn* (Raven); the latter he took from Ali when he was dead, and another horse also called *Hrafn* was bred by him; he sent it to King Godgest in Hálogaland. Godgest rode on it and could not stop it and fell down, and was killed"[1] (Ynglinga Saga, ch. 33).

The chief Thorstein Kuggason had to seek shelter during bad weather at the farm of Björn Hitdælakappi while going to help his foes. When Thorstein took leave:

"Björn sent for the stud-horses which were near the hay-house, for fodder was given to them while the bad weather lasted. The stallion was a son of *Hviting* (some famous stallion) and was white, but the mares were chestnut. Another

[1] Cf. also Flateyjarbók, i. 401; Hrólf Kraki, c. 44; Heidarviga Saga, c. 20; Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 13.

son of Hvíting, also white, was in Thórarinsdal; but the mares (with him) were black. Björn had the stud-horses led to Thorstein, and said he wished to give them to him. Thorstein said he would not take them; 'for I am not yet worthy of gifts from thee, and if I reward thee not for this entertainment which I have now received from thee then I shall probably not reward thee for further benefits, but, if I reward the entertainment as well as thou deservest, then I will receive the horse, and see that thou gettest something in return' " (Björn Hitdæla kappi's Saga, p. 55).

An Icelander, Odd Úfeigsson, had traded with the Finns, which no man was allowed to do without the king's leave. Thorstein, one of Harald Hardrádi's hirdmen, saved him from Harald, who wanted to slay him, and Odd escaped to Iceland. On one occasion, when Hárek, Thorstein's kinsman came to Iceland,

"Odd sent with him to Norway a good stud of horses as a gift to Thorstein, and said, as was true, that Thorstein had saved the lives of him and his crew. Hárek came to Norway to his kinsman Thorstein, who was still with the king. He brought him the horses and said they were sent to him by Odd. Thorstein said: 'This is very unfortunate for me as but for this the help that I gave Odd and his men would not have been known; now I cannot hide it, and it is somewhat difficult to escape.' Thorstein showed the horses to the king, and said, 'they were a gift sent by Odd.' The king answered: 'I was not worthy of gifts from Odd; he has sent them to thee and not to me' "[1] (Fornmanna Sögur, vi. 383–384).

The magnificence with which the harness used by these people was ornamented is shown by their horse-collars, several of which, made of wood and richly decorated, are now in the Museum of Northern Antiquities in Copenhagen. The fact that such collars have always been found in pairs shows that two horses were generally harnessed to the waggons used; the pair is always similar, and the ornamentation at the ends, often of bronze gilt, or silver, or gold, generally consists of animals' heads such as are so commonly represented on fibulæ. At the top of the collars is a hole, through which the

[1] Cf. also Finnboga Saga, c. 23; Gunnlaug Ormstunga's Saga, c. 5.

rein passed, and the wood is decorated with representations of human heads of metal, the triskele, and birds, &c., riveted on.

Fig. 664.—Collar for driving of gilt bronze, grave mound, Jutland. ¼ real size.

A remarkable horse-collar was found at Sollested, Assens, Fyen, in a sepulchral chamber, 30 feet long, 9 feet broad, with its entrance facing the north-east; the representations of heads

Fig. 665.—⅔ real size.

Horse-collar found in sepulchral chamber at Sollested, Assens, Fyen. Among other interesting finds in this sepulchral chamber were the remains of a cinerary urn with burnt bones and

Fig. 666.

Fig. 667.

Front view. ⅓ real size.

fragments of iron; equipment for two horses, including remains of a magnificent saddle, horses' bits ornamented with gold and silver; stirrups inlaid with silver and gold, &c., &c.

riveted to the collar are similar to numerous ones found in Southern Russia, of which many examples are to be seen in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

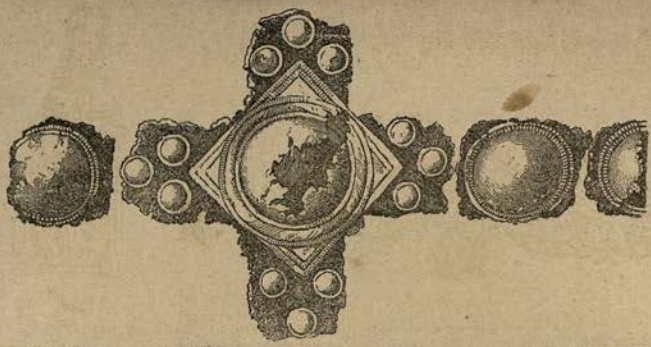

Fig. 668.—Fragments of harness with nails and other ornaments of iron covered with silver, sewn on leather. Real size. Denmark.

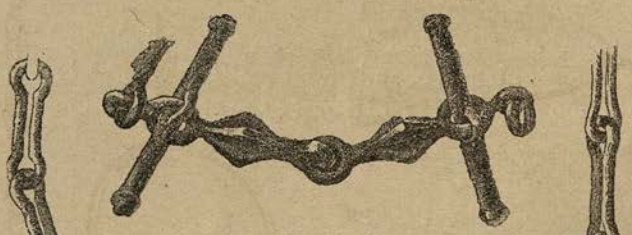

Fig. 669.—Iron bits.

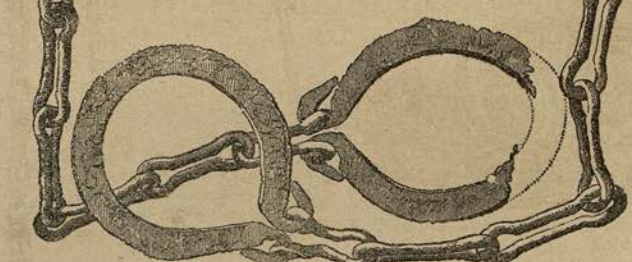

Fig. 670.—Chains of iron, ¼ real size, with large rings at the end. Sollested.

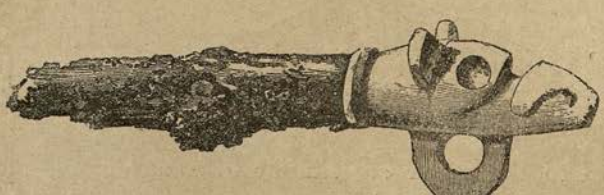

Fig. 671.—End of waggon-pole. Real size. Sollested.

Fig. 672.

Fig. 673.

Parts of a bit of bronze gilt, ⅔ real size, found in a round tumulus explored in 1852, containing the remains of a ship and a waggon, pieces of a wooden saddle riveted with gilt bronze ornaments, several stirrups, bones of several animals, &c. Vold Borre, Norway.

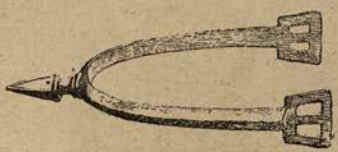

Fig. 674.—Iron spur found in a tumulus. ⅓ real size. Norway.

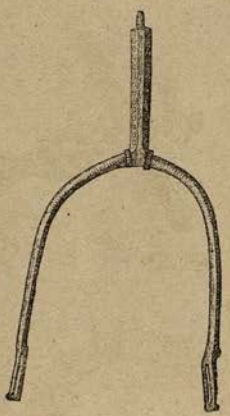

Fig. 676.—Iron spur, found in a tumulus with a stone vase, a single-edged sword, an axe, two spear-heads, a shield-boss, a pair of stirrups, &c. ⅓ real size. Norway.

Fig. 675.—Ornament to horse collar of bronze gilt. ½ real size.

Fig. 677.—Part of horse collar of bronze. ½ real size.

Fig. 678.—Bronze bridle, little less than ⅓ real size, found in a tumulus. Norway.

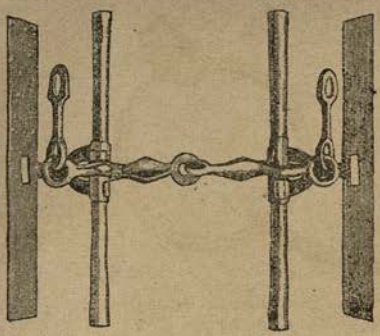

Fig. 679.—Iron bit, $\frac{2}{5}$ real size, found in a tumulus with a two-edged sword, two spear-heads, an axe, three knife-blades, fragments of a shield-boss, &c., all of iron. Norway.

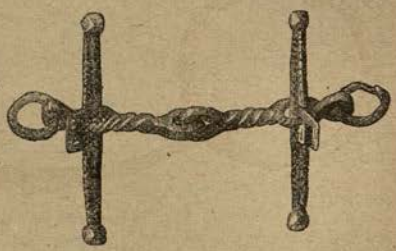

Fig. 680.—Iron bit, $\frac{2}{5}$ real size, found in a tumulus with a large axe, a spear-head, thirteen arrow-heads, six shield bosses, two knife-blades, clinch nails, &c. Norway.

Fig. 681.—Iron bit found in a tumulus. $\frac{2}{5}$ real size. Norway.

Fig. 682.—Iron bit. $\frac{2}{5}$ real size. Norway.

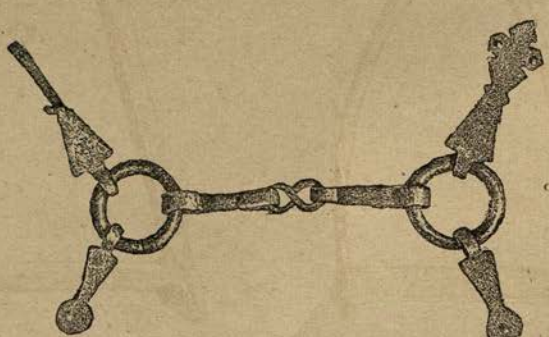

Fig. 683.—Iron bit, $\frac{2}{5}$ real size, found in a tumulus, with burnt bones. Norway.

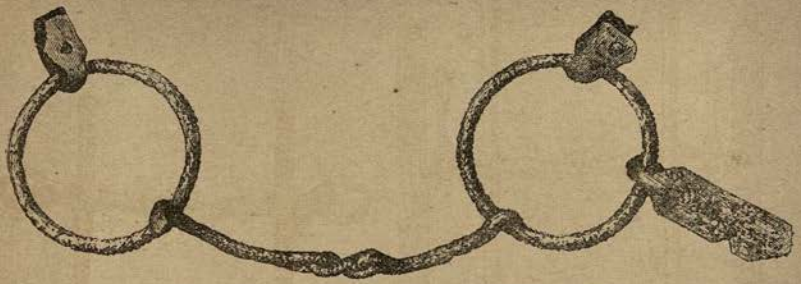

Fig. 684.—Iron bit for horses. ⅓ real size. Ultuna.

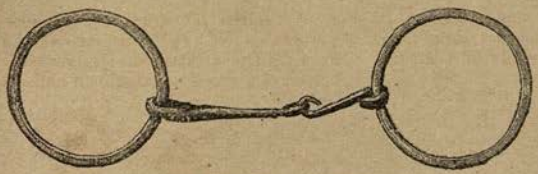

Fig. 685.—About ¼ real size. Norway. In a mound.

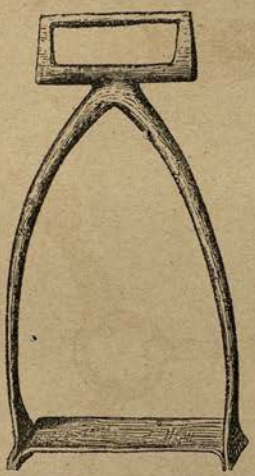

Fig. 686.—Stirrup, ⅓ real size, found in a mound upon the island of Bjorko.

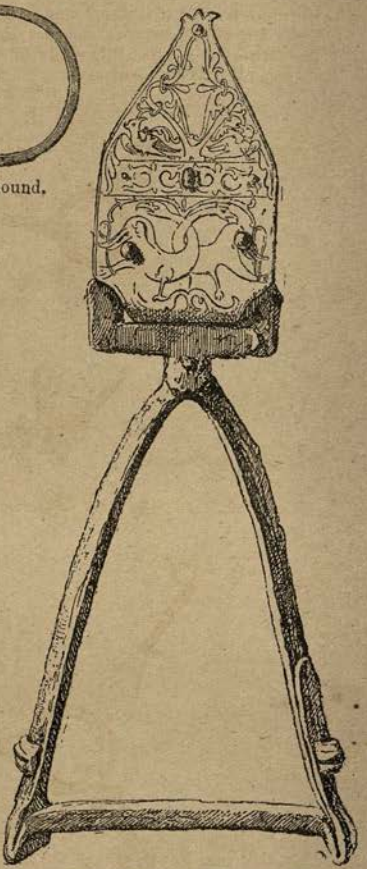

Fig. 687.—Stirrup of iron inlaid with silver. ⅓ real size. Viborg, Jutland. In a grave with other riding gear.

Fig. 688.—Iron stirrup. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Norway.

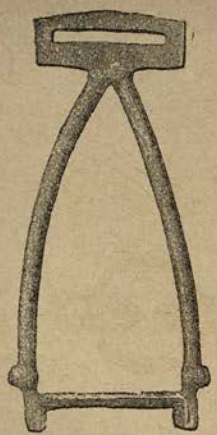

Fig. 689. — Iron stirrup, found in the upper part of a large round mound, with two double-edged swords bent in two, three spear-heads, five horses' bits, a pair of shears, pincers, two bronze fibulæ, horses' teeth, burnt bones, &c. $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Norway.

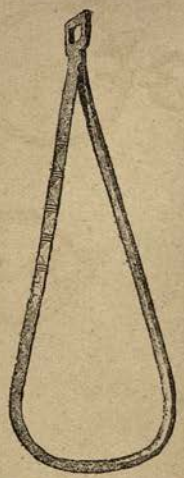

Fig. 690.—Iron stirrup $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Norway.

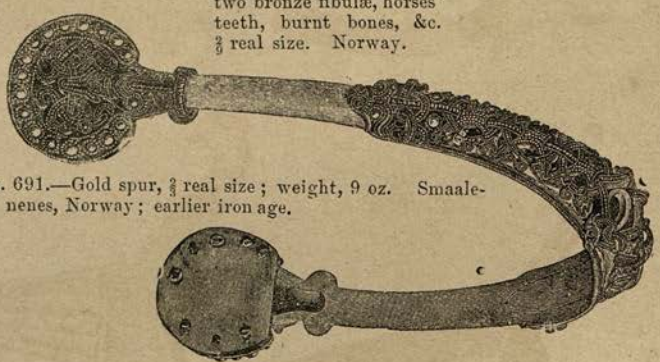

Fig. 691.—Gold spur, $\frac{2}{3}$ real size; weight, 9 oz. Smaalenenes, Norway; earlier iron age.

Fig. 692.

Full

view.

Fig. 693.

Ornaments of above spurs, real size; weight, $1\frac{1}{6}$ oz.; the point of iron missing; traces of the rust still seen. Smaalenenes, Norway.

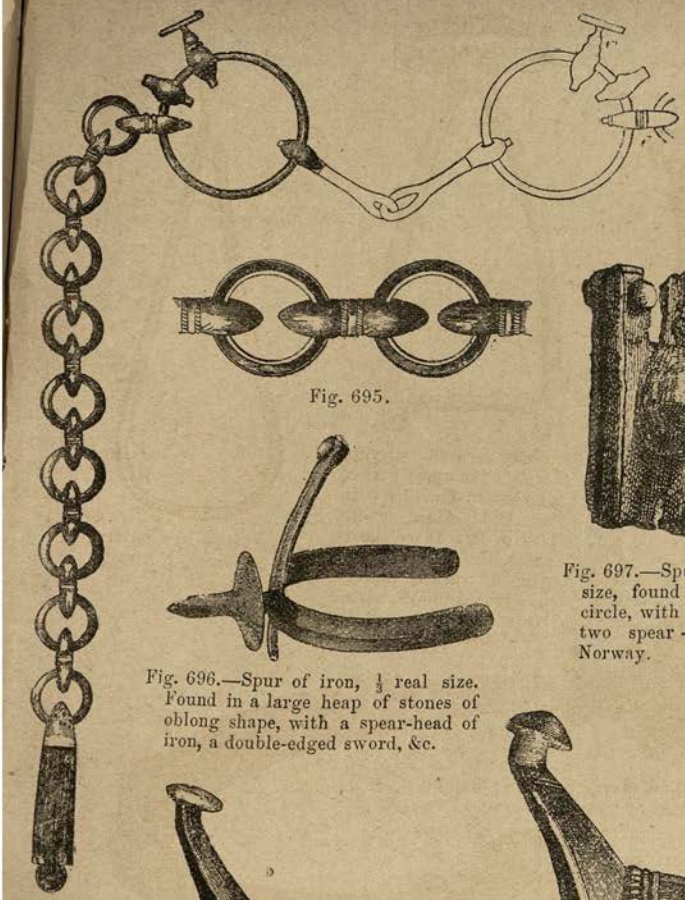

Fig. 694.—Bridle and bit in bronze, Småland. Collection of Count G. Essen. $\frac{1}{3}$ real size.

Fig. 695.

Fig. 696.—Spur of iron, $\frac{1}{3}$ real size. Found in a large heap of stones of oblong shape, with a spear-head of iron, a double-edged sword, &c.

Fig. 697.—Spur of iron, real size, found in a paved circle, with burnt bones, two spear-points, &c. Norway.

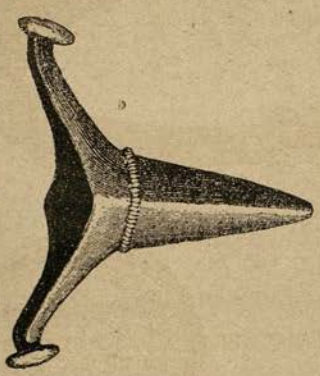

Fig. 698.—Spur of bronze. Öland. Real size.

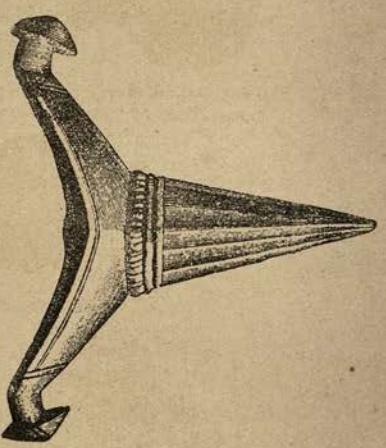

Fig. 699.—Spur of bronze, real size, found in mound, with another spur quite similar, a bronze kettle, a bent double-edged sword, a spear-head spoiled intentionally, &c. Norway.

Waggons are seldom mentioned in the Sagas, and no description of their appearance is given; but we learn that dead warriors were sometimes put in them and burned on the pyre, and the correctness of this statement is proved by the finds in various graves, among others in one at Broholm, Fyén, where fragments of a waggon have been found together with burnt bones, a large kettle, several iron swords, shield bosses, gold jewels, &c.,&c. But though remains of waggons have been found,

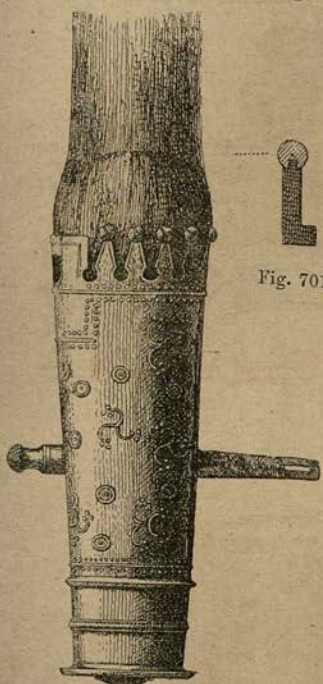

Fig. 700.

Fig. 701.

Fig. 702.

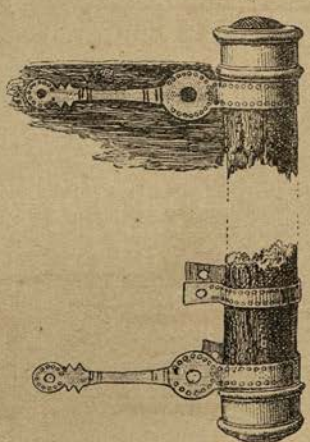

Fig. 703.

Parts of perch of waggon with symbolic signs. Denmark.

it was not till the discovery in the bog of Deibjerg, Ringkjöbing in the North of Jutland, that we obtained a knowledge of their shape and of the splendour of their ornamentation.

In this bog two waggons of a similar pattern, one of which in an almost complete state of preservation is represented here, were discovered. The spokes of the wheels had evidently been bent by heat, and the iron tires round them had apparently been bent by force; the pole, which was also richly ornamented

with bronze, and the bottom and sides were well preserved, but the waggon of which a representation is given was more copiously ornamented with mystic signs than its companion. The following extracts from Sagas refer to the use of these

Fig. 704.

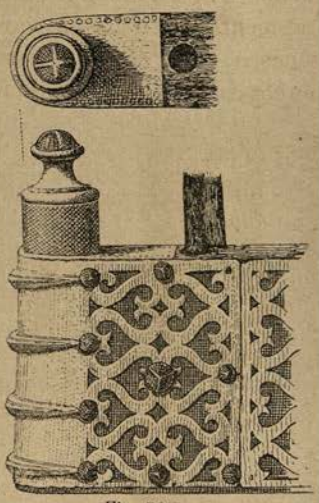

Fig. 705.

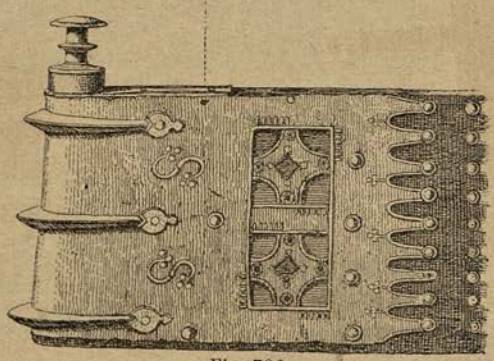

Fig. 706.

Parts of sides of different waggons with symbolic signs. Denmark. ¼ real size.

waggons by the people. It is interesting to note that these waggons are almost identical in shape with the modern *Kärra*, used in Sweden. (See 'Land of the Midnight Sun,' Vol. i., p. 51).

Gunnar said he was ready
To offer gold,
To redress claims,
And also Högni;

She (Grimhild)[1] asked
Who would go
To saddle the horse,
To horse the waggon,
To ride the steed,
To fly the hawk,
To shoot arrows
Of the yew-bow.[2]

Then on a horse
Was every warrior seen,
And into waggons
Welsh (foreign) wives were lifted.
We rode seven days
Over the cold land,
And other seven
We pressed the waves,
And the third seven
We stepped on dry land.

(Gudrúnar Kvida, ii. 18, 35.)

"King Sigurd of Hringariki had two children, a daughter Ragnhild, and a son Guthorm. Haki the Berserk slew him and took his son and daughter home with him. Hálfdán the black sent one hundred men for them, who fetched them and burned the hall of Haki. They tented a very fine waggon, and put Ragnhild and Guthorm in it" (Hálfdán the black's Saga, ch. 5).

"One summer King Eirek had a feast made at Uppsalir. Then he had two waggons driven to the place where he sacrificed to the god called Lýtir. It was customary for the waggon to stand there during the night and for the god to come in the morning. Now Lýtir did not come as he usually did, and the king was told that he disliked to do so. The waggon stood for two nights and he did not come. Then the king began to offer much greater sacrifices than before, and the third morning they became aware that Lýtir had come. Then the waggon was so heavy that the horses fell dead from exhaustion before they could pull it to the hall. The waggon was then put on the middle of the floor of the hall, and the king walked to it with a horn, and welcomed Lýtir, and said, he wanted to drink to him and was very anxious that he should undertake the journey, and that he would give him large gifts as before" (Flateyjarbók, i. 579–580).

"When he was ready to ride away two white horses with black ears were led forward, they belonged to Thord Breidavad and had disappeared that summer at the Thing" (Heidarviga Saga, c. 20).

"The queen 'Yrsa' had twelve horses led forward, they were all brown except one which was white as snow, and on this one Hrolf was to ride. They were the best horses of King

[1] Grimhild had asked her sons Gunnar and Högni to pay *weregild* to Gudrún because they had slain her husband, Sigurd Fafnisbani.

[2] This shows that bows of yew as well as of elm were used.

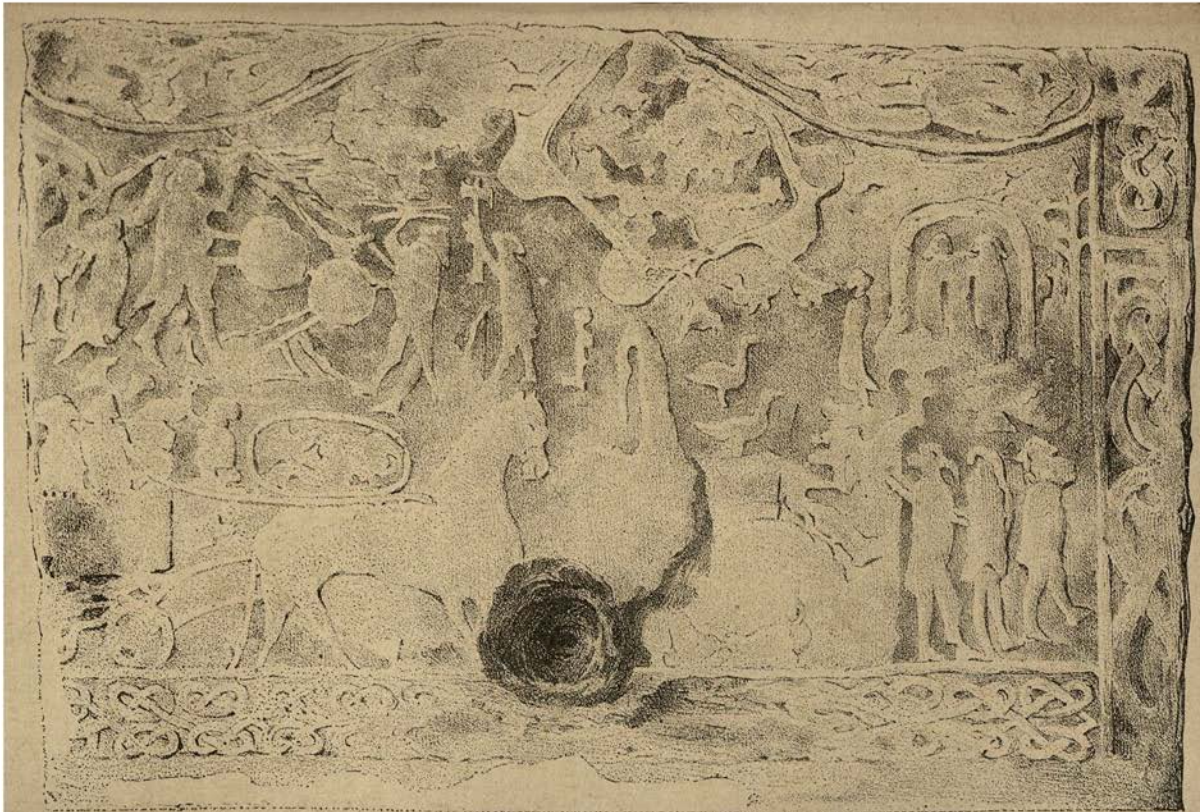

Fig. 707.—Scene with waggon bas-relief; length, 5 feet 9 inches; height, 4 feet 6 inches. This remarkable stone had been a good deal cut in order to range with other stones forming the flooring of the church of Alskog, Gotland. It was preserved from entire destruction by Prof. P. A. Save. Unfortunately, from the softness of the sandstone and the tramping of feet, it has become very indistinct. What the scene was intended to represent it is difficult to say.

Adils and covered all over with armour" (Hrolf Kraki Saga, c. 44).

"There were four stud horses of Thorstein's of red colour. They looked well but not fully broken. Thorstein offered to give him the horses, but Gunnlaug said he needed no horses as he was to leave Iceland. Thereupon they rode towards the stud horses, there was a gray stallion with four mares. It was the best stallion in Borgarfjord" (Gunnlaug Ormstunga, c. 5).

Fig. 708.—Runic stone, with waggon and horse.—Near Levede, in Gotland.[1]

We find that the laws contained regulations in regard to the making of the roads, and the shutting of gates.

"The highroad shall be so broad that a man can sit on a saddled horse and put his spear-handle on the ground and put his thumb as high up as he can and the spear shall be one span longer. It shall be laid down across the road. It shall not be broader" (Gulath).

"If a man walks through the gate of a fence he who opens it shall be answerable as to shutting it. If cattle or horses go inside and spoil a field or meadow, then the opener of the gate shall pay back according to valuation all the damage made" (Gulath).

[1] Another stone in relief has been found by Prof. Save, nearly 12 feet high, at Larbrö, in the northern part of the island of Gotland; of the same horse-shoe shape as shown here and on p. 58, with representations of ships, horses, and the eight-footed horse Sleipnir.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VARIOUS FORMS OF GRAVES.

Different forms of graves—Picturesque situation—Various shapes of mounds—Bautastones—The Hjortehammar burial-ground—Stone-set graves—Ship-form graves—Triangular graves—Anund's mound.

MOULDERING bones and ashes of mighty heroes and noble women now forgotten under the mounds, or in the graves made hoary by the centuries that shroud you by their oblivion, I salute you! We also shall be forgotten.

The thousands of mounds, cairns, *bautasteinar* (memorial stones) and graves found to this day all over the North show the high veneration the earlier English-speaking tribes had for their dead; these mounds or cairns are always situated on some conspicuous place by the coast, from which a magnificent view can often be had.

We have already treated of graves at some length with special reference to the age—stone, bronze, or iron—to which they belonged, and also with relation to the objects found in them. Before, however, proceeding to speak of the burial customs of the Norsemen it may be well to give some further idea of the various classes of graves.

Sweden is particularly rich in these mementoes of the past, in the midst of which the high roads not unfrequently pass, forming a most impressive scene. What emotion have I felt when standing upon many of these graves, deeply impressed by the beauty or loneliness of the site chosen and of its surroundings; perhaps never more so than on the coast of Bohuslän—the Viken of yore.[1] There the cairns have been

[1] In Tanum parish, Bohuslän, alone there are more than 2,000 mounds, the largest being about 300 feet in circumference; near Upsala nearly 600; at Ultuna, 700.

The greatest number of mounds found in any one spot is east of the ancient Birka Bjorko, where there are over 1,000 of them; while seven graves, as will be seen in the course of the narrative, are found close together.

erected on the summit of the bare solid rocky hills of primary formation, several hundred feet above the level of the water, and overlooking a panorama of fjords, sounds, barren islands and desolate coast, with the open seas beyond, and with the sun sinking below the horizon. The waves strike at their base, and with the wind sing mournfully a requiem over the forgotten dead; their work is done, the glorious mission they had to accomplish in the history of the world is ended, the mighty drama of the sword is closed.

It is towards evening, before the twilight fades gradually

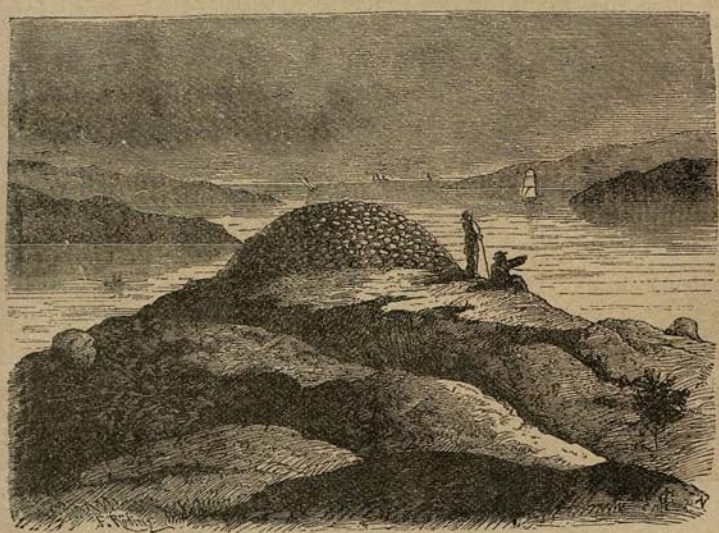

Fig. 709.—Cairn, Bohuslän, Sweden.

into darkness, that the scene of this weird landscape is most impressive, and no one can really imagine its effects until he stands upon the spot and sees the view spread before him.

In some parts of Norway the contrast is often great in the extreme; the mounds there have huge mountains in the background with their summits clad in snow, and in the foreground the grand open sea. One of the bleakest spots in the country, where these have been erected, is on the flat gravelly coast of Lyster, which lies between the mountain and the sea;—there, over the last resting-places of those warriors, the wind blows

most fearfully in winter-time, and the sea dashes on the shore in huge foamy white waves.

In Denmark and parts of Sweden there are places on the elevated points of the coast full of charms, looking over the Sound, the Cattegat, the Baltic, or the waters of some of the great lakes. Many of these resting-places of man are now covered by forests, and upon some of the mounds huge oaks sprung from the acorn of their sires tell forcibly of the centuries that have passed over them.

We can vividly realise why the people laid their dead to

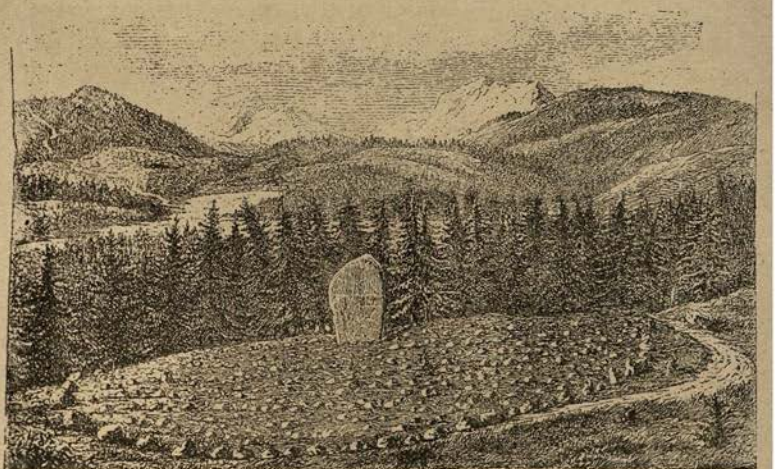

Fig. 710.—Grave, Einang, Norway; diameter, 50 feet; earlier iron age.

rest by that sea they loved so much during their lifetime, and upon which they had sailed so often. The mariner as he passed by could behold the graves of the dead and victorious champions, whose memory was always kept fresh by the *scalds*[1] who sang his exploits generation after generation, thus filling the youth of the country with pride, and making them wish to emulate the deeds of these men, often their kinsmen of old, who had gone to Valhalla.

The mounds and cairns are not always round, they are sometimes square, oblong, rectangular or triangular. The

[1] Poets, see vol. ii. p. 389.

round mounds and cairns exist in different parts of the world, and in Scandinavia as far back as the stone and bronze ages; the vast number of bautastones seen all over the country shows also how well the injunctions of Odin were carried out by his followers in that respect. Some of these are very imposing, and their dark forms look weird enough against the landscape or the clear or gloomy sky. One of the finest stood

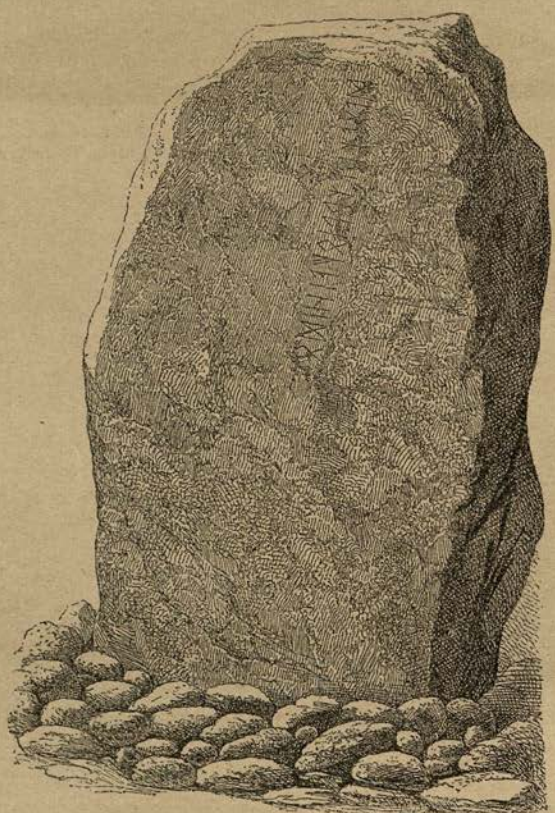

Fig. 711.—Bautastone (from grave shown on p. 301) with nineteen runes; $\frac{1}{15}$ real size; 5 feet 8 inches in height; width, 3 feet 2 inches; 9 inches thick; length of rune, 2 feet 1½ inches.

in Brastod parish, Bohuslän, now lying prostrate and broken, its height being 26 feet; and its place was on one corner of a stone set of rectangular graves 40 feet in length and 28 feet in width.

Fig. 712.—Bautastone on a mound 200 feet in circumference and 7 feet high, Runesten Grimeton (Bohuslän), Halland; 19½ feet high, 4½ feet wide. Surrounding it are mounds and graves of various shapes.

Fig. 713.—Oblong mound, Yttersala, Södermanland; 33 feet in diameter. In the vicinity are numerous other graves of various shapes.

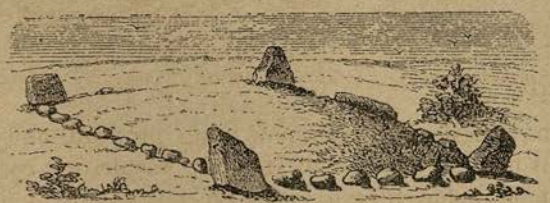

Fig. 714.—Square stone-set grave, Södermanland.

Fig. 715.—Rectangular stone-set graves with bautastones. Length, 70 feet; width, 24 feet.—Färentuna parish, Upland, Sweden.

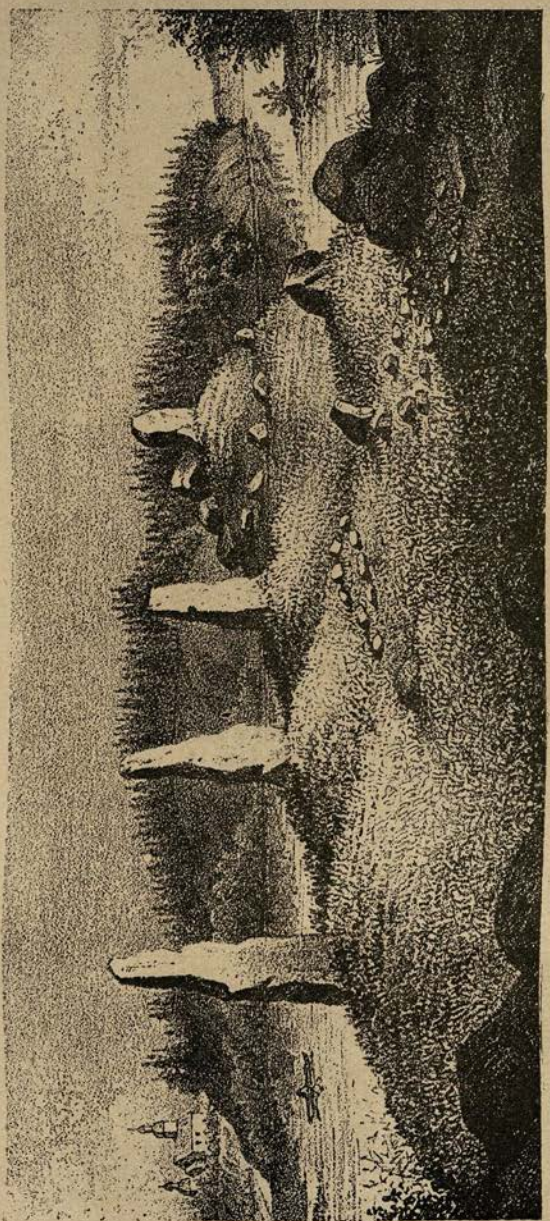

Fig. 716.—Rows of mounds with bautastones from 4½ to nearly 6 feet high, Rekarnebygden, Södermanland. Near by are many other mounds and stone-set graves.

The most interesting of the graveyards which I have seen is that of Hjortehammar, situated in the province of Blekinge on a narrow promontory lost in the maze of islands which dot the

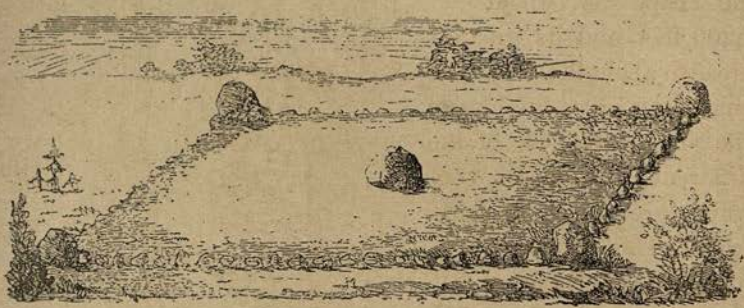

Fig. 717.—Square stone-set graves with large boulders at the corners and centre.

Fig. 718.—Triangular grave; sides of triangle about 50 feet; corner stones about 3 feet high. In the middle of the south-west side are two stones, 5 feet apart, with a slab between them, one 3 feet, the other 4 feet high. Thorsbacken, Nerike, Sweden.

coast of Sweden on this part of the Baltic. It is joined now to an island situated near its further end by a causeway and a small bridge. This is not only remarkable from its position

and size, but on account of the numerous forms of graves of various sizes it contains. The length of the cape is about 1,200 feet, and its greatest breadth about 200 feet. The engraving gives an idea of the shape and size of the different graves, some of which are shown in large scale. This cape is but a continuation of a ridge full of graves; heather and juniper cover many of them; and well chosen was *this* secluded and quiet spot for the last resting-place of their departed kinsmen or friends.[1]

In the *Háleygjatal*, a poem on the genealogy of the famous Hákon jarl, tracing his pedigree to Odin, there is a passage which recalls the burial-place Hjortehammar.

> Straumeyjar-nes which is
> Stone-marked
> Round the Fylkir's[2] body
> Is widely known.

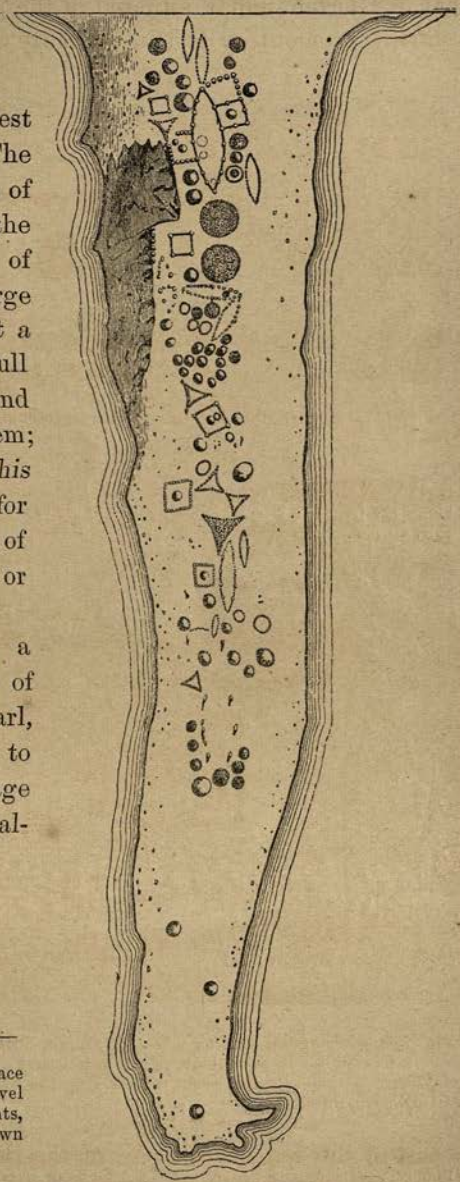

Fig. 719.—Hjortehammar burial-ground, with various shaped graves.

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[1] I was sorry to see the place being gradually destroyed, the gravel taken away, and the embankments, made by the digging, falling down with the grave.

[2] Gudlaug, Hakon's ancestor.

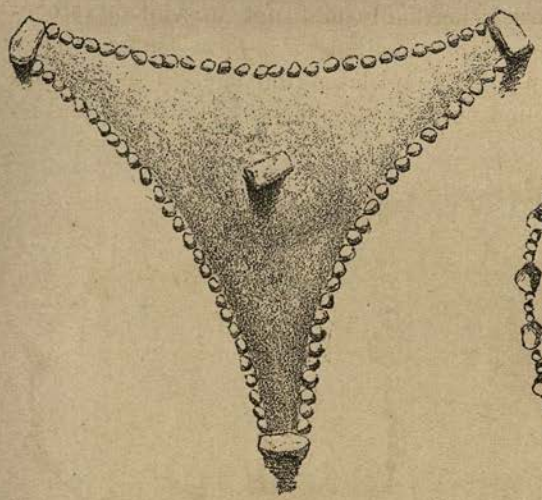

Fig. 720.—Vedby ridge, Blekinge. The large stones are from 4 to 6 feet high. Length of each side, 40 feet.

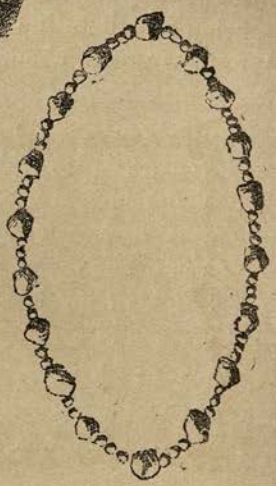

Fig. 721.—Stone-set grave, Blekinge. Length, 38 feet.

Fig. 722.—Triangular grave. Sides 60 to 65 feet long, with a small elevation in the middle, and a bautastone nearly 5 feet high and 2 feet 6 inches broad. Lyngstad, Södermanland.

Among the most remarkable and not uncommon stone-set graves are those of the so-called "*ship-form*" setting; they belong both to the earlier and later iron age. This peculiar form of grave is found on the peninsula of Scandinavia and on

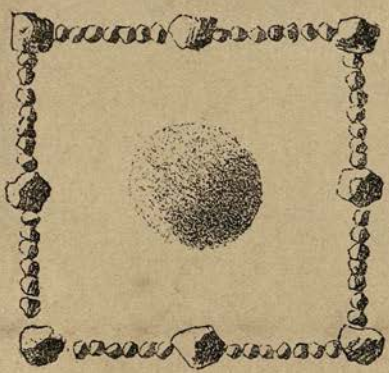

Fig. 723.—Blekinge. Diameter, 30 feet.

Fig. 724.—Listerby ridge, Blekinge. Diameter, 18 feet.

Stone-set graves.

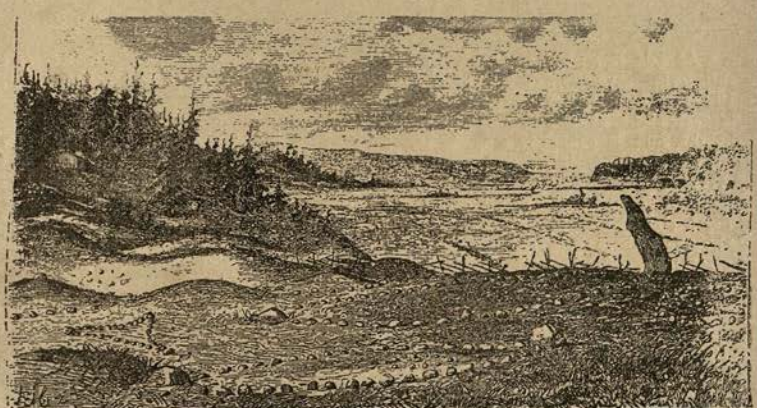

Fig. 725.—Graveyard with mounds and stone-set graves at Åsby, Södermanland.

the islands of Gotland, Öland, and other islands of the Baltic, in Courland and Livonia, and was also erected in England and Scotland by the people of the North.

One of the most interesting is that where the rowers' seats

are marked, and even a stone placed in the position of the mast.

The longest ship-form grave which I think is known is one near Kåsberga, a fishing village in the southern part of Sweden, with a length of 212 feet and a width of 60 feet. It is made by thirty-eight stones, the two forming the prow being 12 and 18 feet in height above the ground—the latter being the northern one.

But the finest of all, though less in size, is the famous one

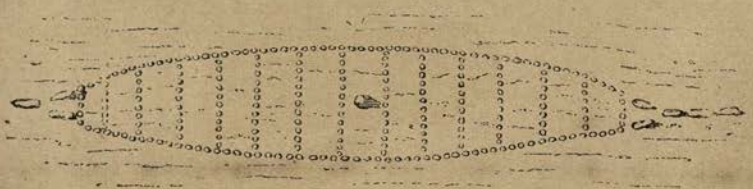

Fig. 726.—Ship-form grave, Karums parish, Öland.

of Blomsholm, near Strömstad, the whole neighbourhood of which is surrounded with mementoes of the past—graves, dom-rings, mounds, bautastones, and rock-tracings.[1]

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[1] At Eds, Upland, there is a very fine ship-form grave of twenty-eight stones, 182 feet long and 50 feet wide. The largest stone at one end is 9 feet in height, and is evidently a bautastone; the rest, although large, each measuring several feet in circumference, are common boulders. At the centre of the ship there lies a similar stone, where, as well as at the ends, there is a small mound-like elevation.

In the woods at Braidfloar, between Levide and Sproge in Götland, there is a ship-form grave 144 feet long, but only 16 feet at its widest part; the stones, however, are small, none being higher than 3 feet.

At Lungersas, Götland, Nerike, there is a ship-form grave in which stands a stone with an inscription in later runes.

There is also a bautastone with runes, in one end of a ship-form at Lilla Lundley in Lids, Södermanland, upon which are the words "*Spjute and Halfdan* raised this stone after *Skarde* their brother. He went eastward with Roar. In Serkland lies the son." (See p. 356 Yellow Book, Den yngre jernalder.)

A ship-form grave between the post-stations of Ljungby and Hamneda province of Kronobergs is 92 feet long and 32 feet broad; the neighbourhood is full of grave-mounds and bautastones.

Another near the shore of the Baltic, in Eista parish, Götland, is 50 feet by 16 feet. A third, on the island of Faró, near Götland, is 50 feet by 8 feet.

We see by this that their breadth does not always bear the same proportion to their length.

In two ship-forms at Hjortehammar, in Blekinge, there were found burned bones, ashes, two of the bowl-shaped fibulæ of bronze so common during the later iron age, a round fibula of silver, some glass beads, &c.

In one at Raftötangen, in Tanum parish, was an urn filled with ashes, on the top of which lay a finely ornamented damascened sword of the later iron age.

Fig. 727.—Ship-form graves, Blomsholm, Bohuslan, made of forty-nine upright stones (formerly there were fifty-one). Length, 141 feet; greatest breadth, 31½ feet; prows north and south, the northern headstone 11 feet high, the southern 14½, the stones gradually diminishing in size towards the centre, where the largest is about 3 feet. Built on a small mound or elevation which was higher in former times.

Fig. 728.—Sjusta mound, Skog parish, Upland; 204 feet in circumference; 28 feet high; with a row of stones at its base. At the south end is another stone-set mound.

Fig. 729.—Type of Mound with bautastone at the top and circle of stones at the base.

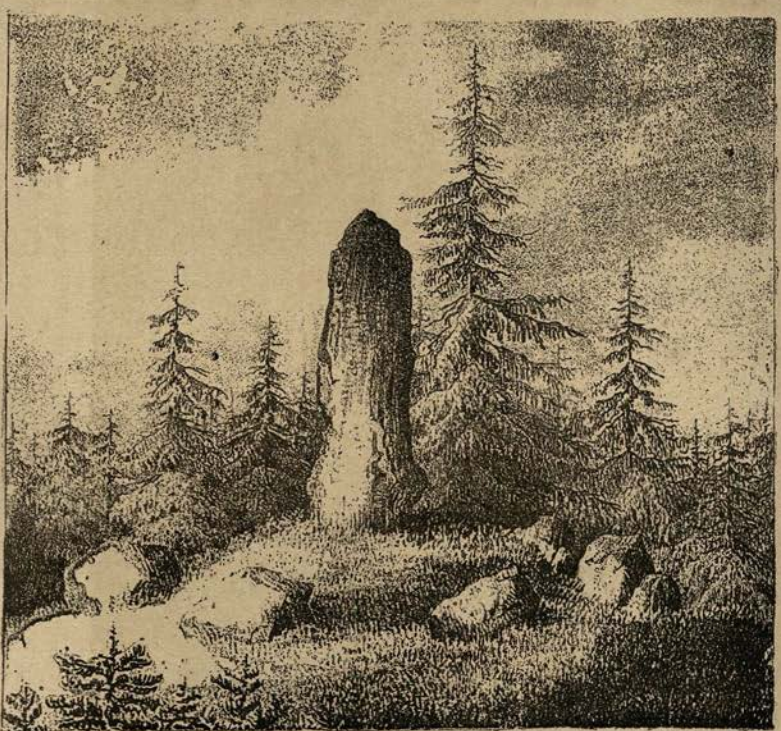

Fig. 730.—Mound, 3 feet high, with bautastone, Balunda parish, Westmanland.

Fig. 731.—Triangular graves; stone forming the apex, with runes, is about 25 feet from the two others, which are 14 feet apart.—Björktorp, Blekinge.

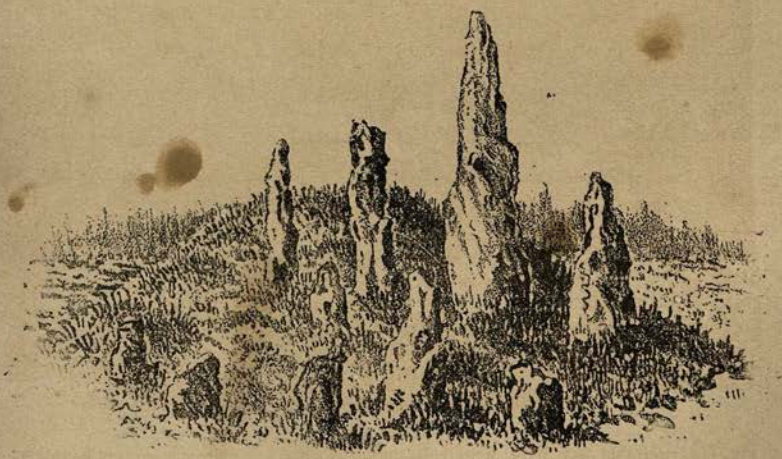

Fig. 732.—Incomplete mound; 50 feet in circumference; 10 feet high; largest stone over 6 feet high; in Thortuna parish, Westmanland.

Fig. 733.—Mounds on Kjula-ridge, Södermanland.

Fig. 734.—Mound set with boulder-stones, Dalsland; circumference of boulders, 100 feet; height of mound, 4 feet, on the top of which are two flat stones standing on edges. Near it is a boulder stone-setting, probably a dom-ring.

Many of the cairns, which are often beautifully arranged, are small, being 4 or 5 feet in height, or sometimes almost even with the ground, their diameter varying from 20 to 80 feet. Numbers of them have stone-settings, sometimes close, sometimes not.

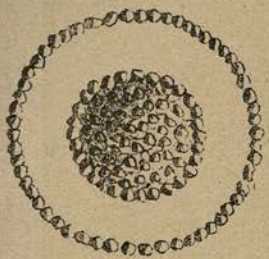

Fig. 735.—Diameter, 20 feet.

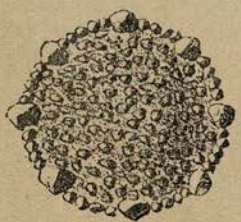

Fig. 736.—Diameter, 16 feet.

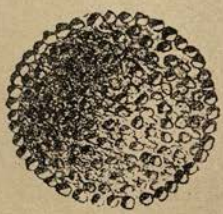

Fig. 737.—Diameter, 16 feet.

Cairns—Blekinge.

Fig. 738.—Round cairn at Björkeby, Foresund, Södermanland.

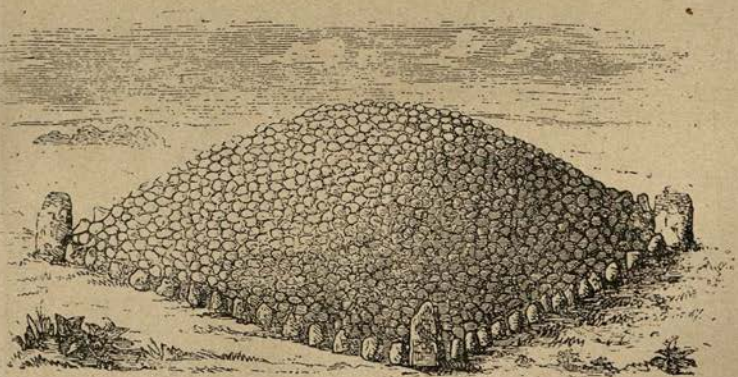

Fig. 739.—Square cairn, island of Öland.

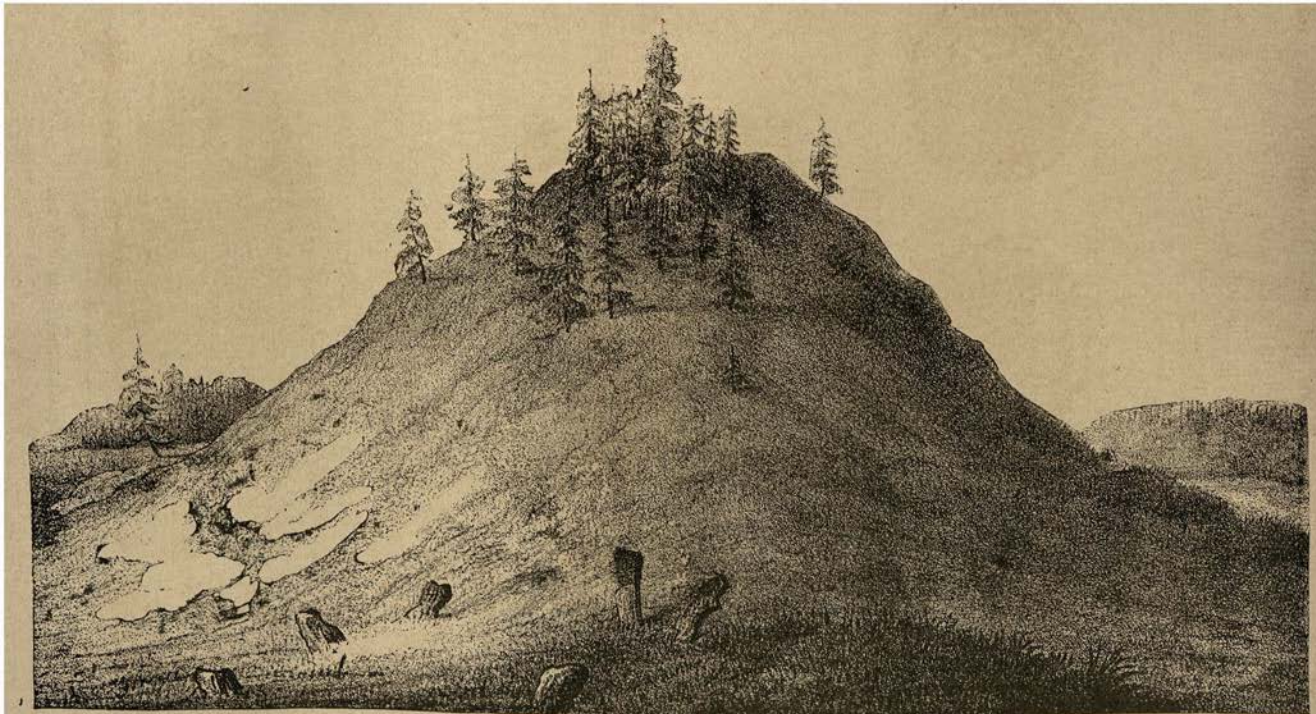

Fig. 740.—Anund's mound, Vestmanland. Circumference, 652 feet; height 84 feet. A great number of standing or fallen bautastones are found near the mound.

One of the most interesting graves which have been recently opened in England is one belonging to the manor of Taplow, near Maidenhead, about fifty miles by river above London. The mound, 240 feet in circumference, and 15 feet high, overlooks the Thames and the surrounding lands.

Among the objects were two shield bones, one sword, fragments of others, fragments of a spear head, one bronze vessel, one wooden bucket so common in the graves of the North, with bronze hoops, &c., two pairs of glass vessels (one

Fig. 741.—Gold fibula ornamented with garnets and red glass. ⅔ real size. Taplow, England.

Fig. 742.—Fibula of bronze, ½ real size, the edge of the triangle and nail heads of bronze, the middle a thin silver plate. Found in a mound with 14 urns and burned bones, a spear point of iron, &c. Zeeland, Denmark.

of which is here represented) similar to one found with a burial ship in Vold in Norway, forty checkers, two pairs of ornaments for drinking horns (all of silver gilt), one green glass bead, &c. &c.; a fibula of the same form as those of the North. But the most remarkable article was a quantity of gold thread belonging to a garment, the triangular form of the pattern still remaining.

This grave, like the one of King Gorm of Denmark and several others of the North, is in the old churchyard where the ancient parish church stood. On the slope of the mound

itself several Christian graves are seen. The viking, like some of the chiefs of the North, was probably buried on his estate, on the land that had descended to him through his ancestors

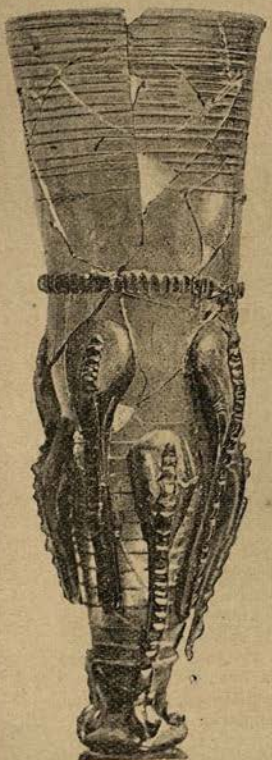

Fig. 743.—Vessel of green glass. ⅔ real size. Taplow, England. 11⅛ inches in height.

Fig. 744.—Ornament of silver gilt, showing end of drinking horn. ½ real size.

Fig. 745.—Silver gilt ornamentation for mouth of drinking horn. ½ real size. The horn itself, found in a mass of small fragments. Taplow, England.

or which possibly he might have conquered from some of his foes. These antiquities by their form seem to belong to the later iron age.

CHAPTER XIX.

BURIALS.

The two modes of burial—Burning of the dead on the pyre—The law of Odin—Ceremonies after death—Laws and superstitions connected with the dead—The journey to *Hel*—The burial of Sigurd and Brynhild—Burial on waggons—Burial of weapons with the dead—Burials in ships—The Gökstad ship's sepulchral chamber—The Moklebust mound.

THE Eddas and Sagas abound with descriptions of funeral rites and burials, the accuracy of which is most fully vindicated by the finds.

Two modes of burial were prevalent among the people, one that of burning the dead, the other of burying them unburned.[1]

It was the belief of the people that the dead burned on the pyre would go to Valhalla with all the weapons and wealth burned with them, and that these would afterwards resume their original shapes. Horses, dogs, falcons, or other animals which the deceased had liked, were often added, and sometimes some of his thralls were killed and burned on the pyre with him.

"Odin enacted the same laws in his land as had formerly prevailed with the Asar. Thus he ordered that all dead men should be burned, and on their pyre should be placed their property. He said thus: that with the same amount of wealth should they come to Valhalla as they had on the pyre; that they should also enjoy what they had themselves buried in the ground. But the ashes should be thrown into the sea or buried in the earth; that over great men mounds should be raised, as memorials; and over men who had some manfulness *bautasteinar* should be erected, and this custom was observed for a long time" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 8).

"It was the custom of powerful men, whether kings or jarls,

[1] Such expressions occur as "i haug lagdr," mound laid; "heygdr," mounded.

at that time to learn warfare and win wealth and fame; that property should not be counted with the inheritance, nor should sons get it after fathers, but it should be placed in the mound with themselves" (Vatnsdæla, 21).

"The first age is called the age of burning; then all dead men were burned and bautastones raised after them. But after Frey had been mound-laid at Uppsalir many chiefs raised mounds as well as bautastones to the memory of their kinsmen. Afterwards King Dan the Proud had his own

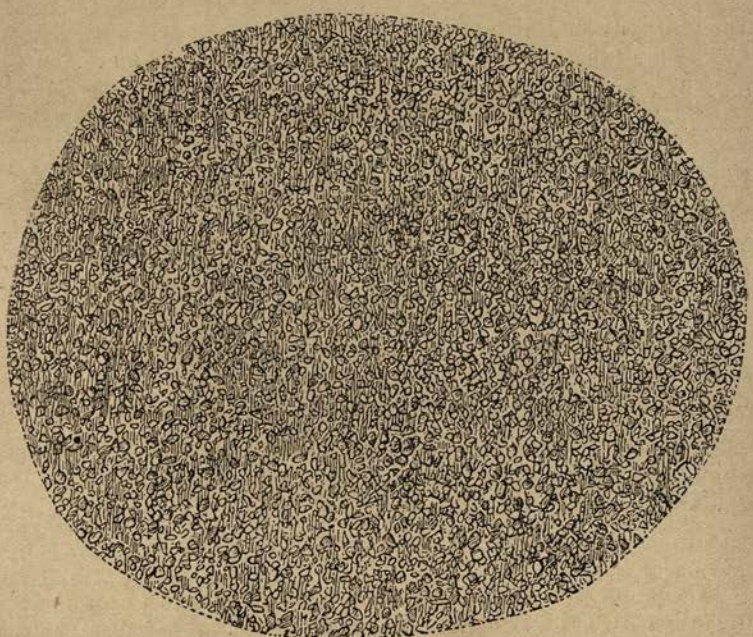

Fig. 746.—Largest pavement of pyre, 33 feet in diameter.—Broholm, Fyen, Denmark.

mound made, and bade that he and also his horse with the saddle on and much property should be carried to it when dead in king's state and in war-dress. Many of his kinsmen did the same afterwards, and the mound-age began in Denmark. But the burning age lasted a long time after that with the Northmen and the Swedes" (Prologue of Heimskringla).

"The first age was the one when all dead men were to be burnt. Then the mound-age began when all powerful men were laid in mounds and all common people buried in the ground" (St. Olaf's Saga. Prologue).

As we read the Sagas we get a vivid and impressive idea of the grand and solemn pageant that must have taken place when the body of a great warrior was put on the funeral pile, and his companions in arms, relatives or former foes bid him happy speed to Valhalla, as the flames ascended high up towards the sky, or the ship sailed from the land in a lurid blaze, while the purifying fire was consuming the corpse. Then followed the ceremony of carefully gathering the charred bones, which were sacredly preserved in an urn or valuable vessel.[1]

The first duty to the dead was to close the eyes and mouth and pinch together the nostrils, which ceremony was called *nabjargir.*

Ninthly I advise thee
To take care of corpses[2]
Wherever on earth thou findest them;
Whether they die from disease,
Or are drowned,
Or killed in battle,
Let a bath be made[3]
For those who are dead;
Wash their hands and head,
Comb and dry them
Ere they are laid in the coffin,
And bid them sleep happily.
(Sigrdrifumál.)

It appears to have been a case of outlawry not to cover a body with mould, and if a slayer maimed the body of his enemy when dead he was fined. The body seems to have been left on a cover until they could lay it in the mound.

"No man shall have a dead man longer than five days in his house except in a necessity, such as if there is impassable ice or a snowstorm. Then it shall be taken to an outhouse and covered with timbers or straw, and removed as soon as the weather is good" (Eidsivathing law II. 41).

If the deceased had during life been a wild and unruly man, fierce in temper, who it was feared might after death, as a

[1] There seem to have been special places built for the burning of the dead. On the island of Fyen, not far from Broholm, and about 1,200 yards from the numerous graves, are two sites of pyres, round in shape, about 120 yards distant from each other. The pavement, about 7 inches in thickness, is made of cobble stones of the size of a man's fist set very close together, and broken into sharp angles. The stones, especially those in the middle, have been exposed to the action of fire, but have been preserved by being covered with earth that had gathered over them brought by wind and rain in the course of centuries.

[2] Nabjargir.

[3] In Sigrdrifumál the texts have in stanza 34 *laug*=bath, and *haug*=mound. The letters *h* and *l* being very like in the manuscripts, we can choose whichever we like best of the two.

ghost, cause trouble in the house where he had lived, some very peculiar ceremonies were observed. The person who was to perform the *nábjargir* did not approach the body from the front, but from behind, and closed the eyes, and not till then did any one else venture to approach to prepare it for funeral. Such a corpse was not carried out of the house through one of the usual entrances, but a hole was broken in the wall behind it, through which it was carried backward.

"Snorri godi (temple priest), the great chief, had received a forest from Thorólf Bœgifot (lame-foot), who wanted to get it back.

"Thorólf Bœgifot (after visiting his son to get his help in this matter) came home in the evening, and spoke to no one. He sat down in his high-seat, but did not eat that evening. He sat there when the people went to sleep, and in the morning when they rose Thorólf still sat there, and was dead. The housewife sent a man to his son Arnkel to tell him the death of Thorólf. Arnkel rode to Hvamm with some of his servants, and saw that his father sat dead in the high-seat. All the people were full of fear, for all thought there was something frightful in his death. Arnkel went into the hall and in along the seats to the back of Thorólf; he bid every man to beware of walking in front of him while the *nábjargir* had not been performed. Arnkel then took hold of the shoulders of Thorólf, and he had to use his strength ere he could lay him down. Then he wrapped a cloth around his head, and prepared his corpse for burial according to custom. Thereupon he had the wall broken behind him, and got him out there. Then oxen were yoked to a sledge, on which Thorólf was placed, and driven up to the valley of Thorsa; but he was not easily brought to the place where he should be. There they buried him carefully. After the death of Thorólf many thought it bad to be out of doors after the sun had set; and as the summer was about to close, they became aware that Thorólf did not rest quiet, for then men could never be at peace outside after sunset. In the spring, Arnkel took Thorólf's body out on a ness, and there buried it anew. He had a fence made across the cape above the grave, so high that nothing but a flying bird could get over it. There Thorólf lay as long as Arnkel lived, but when he afterwards again became troublesome his body was burned, and the ashes thrown into the sea" (Eyrbyggja, c. 33).[1]

[1] Cf. also Egil's Saga, c. 61.

The ceremony was sometimes considered as an incitement for the performer to avenge the dead.

Höskuld, an illegitimate son of Njal and Hródný, was attacked by six men on his way home and slain. Hródný's shepherd found the corpse and told her. They went during the night to Njal's farm, Bergthórshvál.

"Then they both walked to the house and knocked at the door. A húskarl opened the door. She . . . went to Njal's bed. She asked if Njal was awake. He answered: 'I have slept till now, but now I am awake, and why art thou here so early?' She said: 'Rise from the bed of my rival and walk out with me, with her, and with thy sons.' They rose and went out. Skarphédin (Njal's son) said: 'Let us take our weapons with us.' Njal said nothing; they ran in and came out armed with their weapons. Hródný walked in front till they came to the sheephouse. She went in and told them to follow her. She took a creeping light (lantern) and said: 'Here, Njal, is thy son Höskuld. He has got many wounds and now needs to be healed.' Njal said: 'I see marks of death on him but no marks of life. Why hast thou not given him nabjargir as his nostrils are open?' She answered: 'I intended that for Skarphédin.' Skarphédin walked to the corpse and performed the nabjargir. Then he said to his father: 'Who, sayest thou, has slain him?' Njal answered: 'Lýting of Sámsstadir with his brothers has probably slain him.' Hródný said: 'I intrust it to thy hands, Skarphédin, to avenge thy brother. I expect thou wilt do thyself honour though he is not legitimate, and that thou wilt take the revenge into thy hands'" (Njala, c. 98).

Before putting a body in the mound *hel* shoes were put on for the journey to Hell.

"Thereafter Gisli and all his household made ready for the mounding of Vestein, his brother-in-law. He intended to mound him in the sand plain . . . . below Sæból. When they were on their way with the corpse Thorgrím with many men joined him. When they had made the mound Thorgrím godi walked to Gisli and said: It is now the custom, brother-in-law, to tie Hel-shoes on the feet of men before they are mound-laid. For it was said that they (the shoes) should go to Hel when the man was dead, and therefore a man who dresses much when he goes out, or is long in dressing, is said to prepare for Hel. Thorgrím said: I will do this with Vestein and tie the Hel-shoes on his feet. When he had done it, he said: I know

not how to tie Hel-shoes if these are unfastened" (Gisli Súrsson's Saga).

In the weird description of the burial of Sigurd and Brynhild[1] we see that the mound was reddened with blood, and that human beings were burned with them on the pyre.

I will ask of thee
Only one boon;
It will in the world
My last one be;
Let so wide a burgh
Be raised on the plain
That under us all
It be equally roomy,
Beneath us all who shall die
With Sigurd.

Surround that burgh
With tents and shields,
With welsh linen, finely painted,
And Welsh people (thralls);
Burn the Hunnish one[2]
At my one side.

Burn at the other side
Of the Hunnish one
My servants,
With good necklaces,
Two at his head
And two hawks;
Then all is
Equally shared.

Let there yet lie between us
A ring-wound weapon,[3]
A sharp-edged iron
As it before was laid,
When we both
Stepped into one bed
And were called
Husband and wife.

The shining hall-door,
The ring-ornamented[4]
Will not then
Strike him on the heel[5]
If my retinue
Follows him hence;
Then our journey
Will not be poor.

For there follow him
Five bond-maids,
Eight servants,
Of good kin,
My bond-nurse,
And the inheritance[6]
Which Budli gave
To his child.

Much have I told,
More would I tell,
If fate
Gave more time for speaking;
My voice decreases,
My wounds swell,
I told only truth,[7]
Now I will cease.

(Third Song of Sigurd.)

[1] In Brynhild's ride to Hel we have a different account:—

"After the death of Brynhild two pyres were made, one for Sigurd, which was first set on fire, but Brynhild was burned on the other and was in a carriage tented with *god-web* (a kind of fine cloth). It is told that Brynhild drove in the carriage on the road of Hel, and went through the tun where the jötun-woman dwelt" (Hel-reid Brynhildar).

[2] Sigurd.

[3] See Volsunga, ch. 20 and 31.

[4] Probably on account of the ring on the door, as fine doors were ornamented with them.

[5] We will follow on his heels, so that the door will not be shut after he enters, but be open while we enter.

[6] The inheritance—wealth, treasure, dowry, &c., &c.

[7] In the preceding stanzas she has foretold the fate of Gudrun, Gunnar and Högni, as is told in Volsunga.

Another custom no less imposing was to bury the chiefs with their carriages and horses, so that they might make their entries driving into Valhalla, or riding on horseback; and it was considered honourable to go to Odin with many slain.

"The second day after the battle (of Bravoll), in the morning, King Hring caused a search to be made among the slain for the body of King Harald, his kinsman, and a great part of the slain host lay on the top of it. It was mid-day before the search was completed and it was found. King Hring took the body of his kinsman, and washed the blood from it, prepared it magnificently, according to old custom, and laid it in the waggon which King Harald had in the battle. He then raised a large mound, and caused the body to be carried in the same waggon with the horse which King Harald had in the battle, and thus he had him driven to the mound. There the horse was killed. Then King Hring took the saddle he himself had ridden on and gave it to King Harald his kinsman, and bade him do as he liked, either ride to Valhalla or drive. He held a great feast to celebrate the going away of his kinsman. Before the mound was closed, King Hring bade all his high-born men and champions who were present to throw into the mound large rings (gold and silver) and good weapons, to honour King Harald Hilditönn, and the mound was carefully closed" (Sögubrot of Fornkonungum).[1]

If circumstances allowed, the deceased seems to have been placed on a bed prepared for the purpose, until the burial could take place.

"Glúm also went home with his men, and had the dead carried into an outhouse, where Thorvald's body was prepared more honourably than the others, for clothes were laid under him, and he was sewed up in a skin" (Viga Glúm's Saga, c. 23).

In a large burial chamber at Lower Aure, Norway, were found the remains of a chair, thus confirming the accounts of the Sagas about men being placed on their chair in the grave. Some of these chambers were occasionally built of wood.

"Aran, a foster-brother of Asmund, died suddenly. Asmund had a mound raised over him, and placed at his side his horse

[1] For battle, see Vol. ii., p. 436.

with saddle and bridle, his standards, and all war-dress, his hawk and dog. Aran sat on a chair in all his armour. Asmund let his chair be put into the mound and sat down upon it, and then the mound was closed. The first night Aran rose from the chair, killed the hawk and the dog, and ate them both. The second night he rose, killed the horse and cut it to pieces, tearing it much with his teeth; he ate the horse, the blood streaming down from his mouth; he invited Asmund to eat with him. The third night Asmund began to feel sleepy; and suddenly Aran seized his ears and tore them off. Then Asmund drew his sword, and cut Aran's head off; and afterwards burned him to ashes. He thereupon went to the rope and was drawn up, and the mound was closed; Asmund took with him the property which had been placed in the mound" (Egil and Asmund's Saga, c. 7).

"Angantyr had a large mound raised below the Havada-mountains, at the place where the king had been slain. It was built with timber, and was very strong" (Hervarar Saga, c. 16).

Sometimes the body of a man was divided into several portions, and each of these buried in different parts of the country.

"While he (Hálfdán) was king there were very good years. The people made so much of him that when they heard he was dead, and that his body had been taken to Hringariki to be buried there, powerful men from Raumariki, Vestfold and Heidmörk came, and all asked for leave to take his body and mound it in their *fylki*;[1] they thought that those who got it were likely to have good seasons. They agreed to divide the body in four pieces, and the head was mounded at Stein in Hringariki; the others took their pieces home and mounded them, and they are all of them called the mounds of Hálfdán (in Snorri's time)" (Hálfdán the Black's Saga, ch. 9 (Heimskringla)).

Friends often wished to be buried near each other, for they believed that their spirits could talk to each other or look over their household before important events occurred.

"Then Thorstein fell sick. He said to Fridthjof: 'My son, I beg of thee that thou wilt yield to the king's sons with regard to thy temper, for that befits thee on account of their dignity, and I have good hope of thee. I want to be laid in a

[1] A division of land.

mound opposite to King Beli, on this side of the fjord, near the sea, for then it will be easy for us to call to each other before great events.' The foster-brothers of Fridthjof were Björn and Asmund; they were tall and strong men. A short time after Thorstein died; he was mounded as he had prescribed, and Fridthjof got his land and personal property" (Fridthjof's Saga, c. 1).

Several persons were often buried in the same mound; and after a battle many of the slain were buried together.

"After this Hjálmar died. Odd then placed the Berserks in a heap, and piled upon them boughs. This was near the sea. He put with them their weapons and clothing, divesting them of nothing. He covered this with turf and cast sand over it. He then took Hjálmar on his back, carried him to the sea, and laid him down on the shore. He went out on the ships, took ashore every one who had fallen, and there threw up another mound over his men. It is said by those who have gone thither, that to this day are seen those mounds which Odd there made" (Orvar Odd's Saga, c. 14).[1]

"On the following morning Hfrol had the field cleared, and divided the booty among his men. There were raised three very large mounds. In one Hrolf placed his father Sturlaug and Krák, Hrafn's brother and all the best champions of their host who had fallen. In that mound were put gold and silver and good weapons, and all was well performed. In the second was placed King Eirik, Brynjólf and Thórd and their picked men. In the third was Grim Ægir, near the shore, where it was thought least likely that ships would approach. The warriors were buried where they had fallen" (Göngu Hrolf's Saga, ch. 34).

From many descriptions we see with what awe the ancient Vikings regarded the mounds under which renowned chiefs were buried. Over the mounds of great warriors flames were seen at night, and the ghost of the departed was believed to remain there.

When the burning did not take place, the warrior was buried with his weapons and entire equipment. Sometimes he slept with his sword under his head. Angantyr's shoulders rested upon the famous sword *Tyrfing*, and Angrim's sons were buried there in that manner. Many of the weapons placed

[1] Cf. also Göngu Hrolf's Saga, c. 3.

with them were very famous and supposed to possess special or supernatural qualities, and mounds were sometimes broken for the sake of getting them.

"A little after she (the Amazon Hervör) left by herself in a man's dress and weapons and went to Vikings, and was with them for awhile, and was called Hervard. A little after the chief of the Vikings died, and Hervard got the command of them. Once they came to Sámsey. Hervard went up on land, and none of his men wanted to follow him, for, they said, it would not do for any man to stay out there at night. Hervard said that much property was likely to be in the mounds, and went up on the island near sunset. They lay in Munarvag. She met a herd-boy there, and asked him about news. He said, 'Dost thou not know the island? Come home with me, for it will not do for any man to stay out here after sunset; I am going home at once.' Hervard replied: 'Tell me; where are the mounds of Hjörvard?' The boy said: 'Thou art unwise, as thou wantest to search for that at night which few dare search for at mid-day; burning fire plays on the mounds after sunset.' Hervard replied he would certainly go to the mounds. The shepherd said: 'I see that thou art a bold man, though thou art unwise. I will give thee my necklace if thou wilt come home with me.' Hervard answered: 'Though thou wouldst give me all thou ownest thou couldst not hinder me from going.' When the sun set they heard hollow noises in the island, and the mound fires appeared. The shepherd got frightened and took to his feet, and ran into the forest as quickly as he could, and never looked back."

As she comes by the mound she sings:—

Awake, Angantyr!
Hervör thee rouses,
The only daughter
Of thee and Svafa;
Yield to me from the mound
The sharp sword
Which the Dvergar
For Svafrlami forged.

Hjörvard! Hervard!
Hrani! Angantyr!
I awaken you all
Beneath the tree-roots,
Who are clad in
Helmet and coat of mail
With shield and sharp sword,
And reddened spear.

Sons of Arngrim!
Much harm doing,
Much have you
The mould increased,
As no one
Of the sons of Eyfura
Will speak to me
At Munarvag.

Hjörvard! Hervard!
Hrani! Angantyr
So be the mind
Of you all

As if you were rotting
In an ant-hill
Unless ye yield
The sword forged by Dvalin;
It is not fit for ghosts
Costly weapons to hide.

Angantyr.

Hervör, my daughter!
Why callest thou thus
Full of baneful words;
Thou art going to fare badly;
Mad hast thou become
And out of thy senses,
Mind-bewildered,
As thou awakenest the dead.

Neither father buried me
Nor other kinsmen;
The two who lived
Kept *Tyrfing*;
Although at last
One became its owner.

Hervör.

Thou dost not tell me truth;
The As shall leave thee
Unharmed in the grave-mound
If thou hast not *Tyrfing*;
Thou art unwilling
To give the heritage
To thy only child.

Then the mound opened and looked as if it were all on fire and flame. Angantyr sang:

Ajar is the gate of Hel;
The mounds are opening,
All the island-coast
Looks as if on fire;
Outside all
Is awful to behold;
Hasten thee, maiden, if thou canst,
To thy ships.

Hervör.

Ye can not light
Such a flame at night
That I would
Fear your fires;
The *mind-town* of thought[1]
Of the maid does not quail
Though she sees a ghost
Standing in the door.

Angantyr.

I will tell thee, Hervör,
Listen the while,
Wise daughter,
What will happen;
This *Tyrfing* will,
If thou canst believe it,
All thy kin,
Maiden, destroy.

Thou shalt beget a son
Who afterwards will
Tyrfing carry
And trust to his own strength;
This one will the people
Heidrek call,
He will be the mightiest born
Under the tent of the sun.

Hervör.

I thus spellbind
The dead champions
That you shall
All lie
Dead with the ghosts,
Rotting in the mound,
Unless thou yieldest me, Angantyr,
The slayer of Hjalmar,[2]
The one to armours dangerous,
Out of the mound.

Angantyr.

Young maiden, I say,
Thou art not like man
As thou art strolling about
Among mounds in the night
With inlaid spear
And the Goth's metal,
With helmet and mail-coat
Before the hall-door.

---

[1] Breast.

[2] Tyrfing.

Hervör.

I thought hitherto I was
A human being
Ere I called
At your halls;
Hand me from the mound
The hater of mail-coats,[1]
It will not do for thee
To hide the Dvergar's smithying.

Angantyr.

The slayer of Hjalmar
Lies under my shoulders;
All around it is
Wrapped in fire;
No maiden I know
Above the mould
That dares this sword
Take in her hand.

Hervör.

I will hold
And take in my hands
The sharp *mækir*
If I may have it;
I do not fear
The burning fire;
At once the flame lessens
When I look at it.

Angantyr.

Foolish art thou, Hervör,
Though courage owning,
As thou with open eyes
Into the fire rushest;
I will rather yield thee
The sword from the mound,
Young maiden!
I cannot refuse it to thee.

Then the sword was flung out into the hands of Hervör.

Hervör.

Thou didst well,
Kinsman of vikings,
When thou gavest me
The sword from the mound;
I think, king!
I have a better gift
Than if I got
The whole of Norway.

Angantyr.

Thou knowest not,
Thou art wretched in speech,
Imprudent woman,
At what thou art glad.
This *Tyrfing* will,
If thou canst believe it,[2]
All thy kin,
Maiden, destroy.

Hervör.

I will go down
To the steeds of the sea;[3]
Now is the king's daughter
In a good mind;
I fear little,
Kinsman of chiefs,
How my sons
May hereafter quarrel.

Angantyr.

Thou shalt own it
And enjoy it long,
But hidden keep
The slayer of Hjalmar;
Touch thou not its edges,
Poison is in both,
This doomer of men
Is worse than disease.
Farewell, daughter,
I would quickly give thee
The vigour of twelve men
If thou would'st believe it;[4]
The strength and endurance,
All the good
That the sons of Arngrim
Left after themselves.

---

[1] Tyrfing.
[2] I would wish thee to believe it.
[3] Ships.
[4] That Tyrfing was dangerous.

"Then she went down to the sea, and when it dawned she saw that the ships had left. The vikings had been afraid of the thunderings and the fires in the island"[1] (Hervarar Saga, c. 10).

Burial in ships.—The mode of burial in ships would appear to have belonged exclusively to the North, where it seems to have been in much favour, and shows in a remarkable manner the seafaring character of the people.

Until recently few descriptions have been more ridiculed by persons who did not believe in the Saga literature, than those which gave accounts of burials of chiefs, warriors, and others in ships. Here again archæology has come to our aid to prove the truthfulness of the Sagas, and in such a perfect manner as to settle the question beyond controversy; for we find ships in which the body of the dead warrior was not burned, and other ships which have been used as a pyre. The earliest account of such burial is in Voluspa, amplified in the later Edda, which gives us a vivid description of the funeral of Baldr, the son of Odin.

"The Asar took the body of Baldr and carried it down to the sea. Hringhorni was the name of Baldr's ship; it was larger than any other ship. The gods wanted to launch it for the *burning-voyage* of Baldr, but it did not move. Then the *gyg* (Jötun-woman)[2] in Jötunheim, named Hyrrokkin, was sent for. She came riding on a wolf, with snakes for reins. She leapt from the steed, and Odin called to four Berserks to take care of it, but they could not hold it except by throwing it down. She went to the stem of the ship and pushed it forward at the first attempt, so that fire issued from the rollers and the ground trembled. Then Thor grew angry, seized his hammer, and would have broken her head if the gods had not asked him to spare her. The body of Baldr was carried out on the ship, and his wife Nanna, Nep's daughter, on seeing this died

[1] I visited the island of Samsö in order to see if I could discover any indication of the mound of Angantyr. This island stands in the middle of the great belt; it is only in clear weather that part of the coast of the peninsula of Jutland can be seen; its shores are in many parts lined with huge boulders. In some parts mounds, passage graves, dolmens, &c., are to be seen; everything tends to show that in olden times it was a great burial place. Many of the mounds are either hidden by woods, or stand solitary amidst cultivated fields. The scene described in Hervara came forcibly upon my mind, and I wondered not that Hervör knew not where the mound of her father was. This island was well chosen for the resting-place of these men of the sea.

[2] The gyg (ogress, witch) seem to have been women of Jötun race, possessing supernatural strength.

from grief. She was laid on the pyre and it was set on fire. Thor went to it and consecrated it with *Mjölnir*. At his feet there ran a Dverg named Lit. Thor pushed him with his foot into the fire, and he was burned. To this burning came many kinds of people. First went Odin and his ravens and Frigg, as well as the Valkyrias. Frey drove in a carriage drawn by the boar called *Gullinbursti* (gold bristle) or *Slidrugtanni* (the awful-tusked). Heimdal rode the horse *Gulltopp* (gold tuft), and Freyja with her cats. There came also many Hrim Thursar and Bergrisar. Odin laid on the pyre the gold ring *Draupnir;* afterwards every ninth night there dropped from it eight equally heavy gold rings. The horse of Baldr was led on the pyre in full harness" (Gylfaginning, ch. 49).

"They carried him in the snow-storm to Naustanes, where a tent was put over him at night. In the morning, at high water, Skallagrim was laid in a ship, and they rowed to Digranes. Egil had a mound made near the end of the ness (cape), and in this he was laid, with his horse, his weapons, and smithying tools. It is not mentioned that loose property was put in the mound with him. Egil took the inheritance, lands, and loose property; he took care of the farm" (Egil's Saga, c. 61).

Gudrun after having slain her husband Atli said:

I will buy a ship (knörr),[1]
And a painted coffin,
Wax well the sheets[2]
To wrap thy corpse with;
Think of every need,
As if we were friends.

"Geirmund died at Geirmundsstadir, and was laid in a ship in the woods near the farm (gard)."

Of this Geirmund much is told of in Sturlunga as a great chief.

"Thórir, An's brother, fell in a battle against king Lugjaldi of Naumdœlafylki.

"An had a mound made and put a ship in it and placed Thórir in its lypting, but the king's men he placed along both sides of the ship that it might look as if all served him" (An Bogsveigi's Saga, ch. 6).

"The brothers Eirik and Jorund became very famous by this deed (slaying King Gudlaug of Hálogaland), and they thought themselves far greater men than before. When they heard

[1] Volsunga Saga, ch. 38; instead of a ship he is buried in a stone coffin, but the poetry must be more trusted.

[2] Smear well with wax the sheets.

that King Haki had allowed his champions to go away, they sailed to Sweden and collected a host, and when it was known that the two Ynglings had returned the Swedes flocked to them in great numbers. They sailed up into the Log (Lake Mälar) and went to Uppsalir against King Haki, who met them on Fyrisvellir. A great battle ensued; King Haki rushed forward with such valour that he slew all that were near him, he finally killed Eirik and cut down the standard bearers of the brothers, whereupon Jorund fled to his ship with his men. Haki received such severe wounds that he saw his days would not be long. He then had a *skeid* which he owned loaded with dead men and weapons, he had it launched on the sea, and the rudder adjusted and the sea sail hoisted. He had tarred wood kindled and a pyre made on the ship, the wind blew towards the sea. Haki was almost dead when he was laid on the pyre. Then the burning ship sailed out to sea. This was very famous for a long time after" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 27).

"King Hakon then took the ships belonging to Eirik's sons, which lay on the dry beach, and had them dragged ashore. He placed Egil Ullserk, together with all who had fallen on his side, in a ship, which was covered with earth and stones. He also had dragged ashore several more ships, and into these were laid the dead. The mounds are still to be seen south of Frædarberg. High bautastones stand at the mound of Egil Ullserk" (Hakon the Good's Saga, ch. 27).

Women were sometimes buried in ships.

"After this Unn, who was now quite old, as was her custom, went into her sleeping-house to rest, but bade her guests enjoy themselves, and ordered that they be entertained as splendidly as possible. When she retired the feast continued until it was time to go to bed. The next day, as Unn remained longer than usual in her sleeping-room, Olaf went in and found her dead. He returned to the guests and announced this to them, who all said that Unn had well kept up her dignity to the last.

"At the same time Olaf's wedding and Unn's *arvel* were held. On the last day of the feast her body was carried to the mound which had been prepared for it. She was placed in a ship therein, and with her a great deal of property, and then the mound was closed." Olaf then took possession of his grandmother's property, and, after the feast was over, gave fine presents to the foremost of those present, and all departed" (Laxdæla, ch. 8).[1]

[1] Cf. Landnama, ii. An Bogsveigi's Saga, c. 6. Atlamál. Gisli Súrsson. Laxdæla Saga, ch. 7.

Men were sometimes buried in a ship's boat.

"Ingimund was laid in the boat of the ship Stigandi, and his body prepared honourably as was the custom with high-born men. Thorstein said to his brothers: 'It seems to me right that we shall not sit in our father's seat at home, or at feasts, while his slaying is unavenged.' This they did, and neither went to games nor other gatherings" (Vatnsdæla Saga, 22).

One of the most valuable discoveries, showing the burial of a warrior in a ship without his body being burned, is that of the Gökstad ship.

Very few things in the North have impressed me more than the sight of this weird[1] mausoleum, the last resting-place of a warrior, and as I gazed on its dark timber I could almost imagine that I could still see the gory traces of the struggle and the closing scene of burial when he was put in the mortuary chamber that had been made for him on board the craft he commanded.

The warrior had been buried according to his position in life; remains at least of twelve skeletons of horses were found in different parts of the mound on each side of the ship; there

[1] Other ship-graves, such as that of Tune, Borre, &c., have been found with skeletons of horses.

Among other ships found is the Gunnarshaug ship, discovered in Bergen Stift in 1887. The large mound in which it was found had a diameter of over 125 feet, and stood about 590 feet from the shore.

The ship was only partly preserved owing to the action of the soil. Its planks were of oak, thicker and less broad than those of the Gökstad ship, fastened by clinch-nails. In the uppermost planks, considerably thinner than the rest, there are holes at distances of a little over 3 feet. Its keel is about the same length as that of the Gökstad ship.

It stood *north to south*, and has been supported by six stones, each about 6 feet high. Its inside has been clothed with a layer of moss, evidently to hinder decay by the soil, and on one side of it was a heap of shavings, chips and bark, left by the carpenters. There are reasons for thinking that a wooden roof had been erected over the ship, and afterwards broken down.

Of the Viking's body no trace is left, but the remains found indicate his place in the middle of the ship; these are two swords, forging-tools, five long whetting-stones, a tinder-box and pieces of a wooden box. Farther north: several large beads of mosaic glass and fine chesspieces of amber and coloured glass, part of a waxen tablet, a bracelet of gold, &c.

Near the weapons lay an iron kettle and both the stones of a hand-mill, which shows that the Vikings ground their grain at sea. The stem was filled with rust.

Oars and carved tools were also found, and planks of an exceedingly well-built boat of oak, over which there lay a fir plank, several feet long, with steps cut in it, evidently a landing-board (cf. Gökstad ship).

This is the first burial-place found in Bergen Stift where the body was unburnt, but they are common further south.

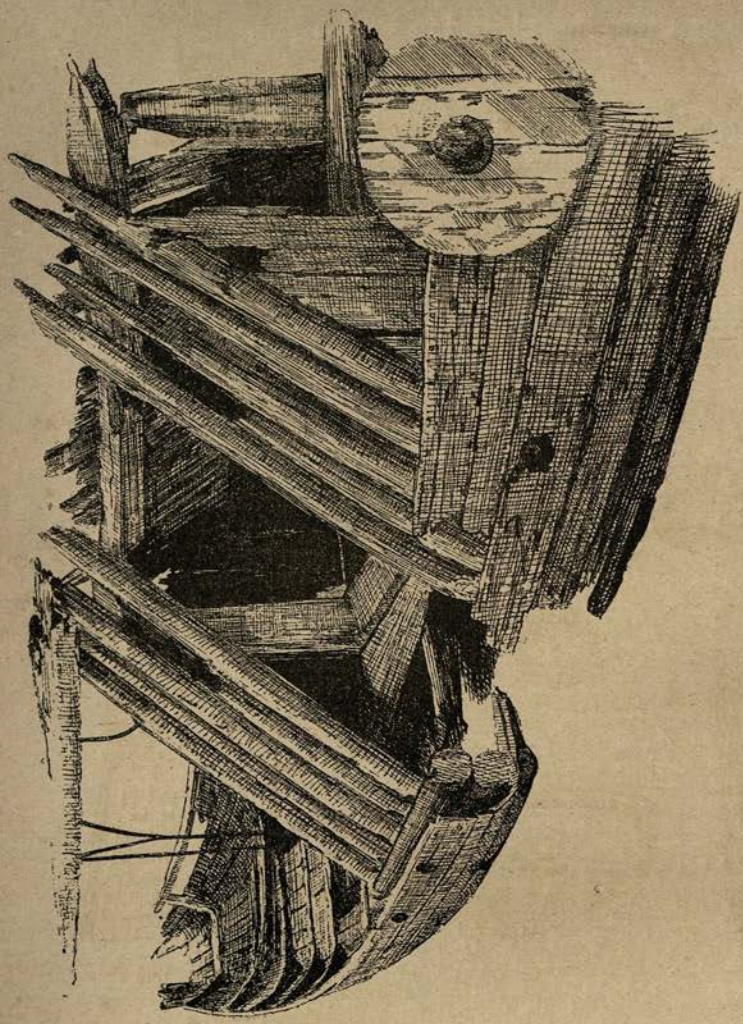

Fig. 747.—Sepulchral chamber, Gökstad ship.
The greatest length of the mound was from N.E. to S.W. About 150 feet in diameter, height above the soil 15 feet; above the sea 18 feet. The roof of the structure had been broken through by the weight of the earth of the mound above it. The large cut in the side was probably made by thieves wishing to get possession of the weapons, &c.

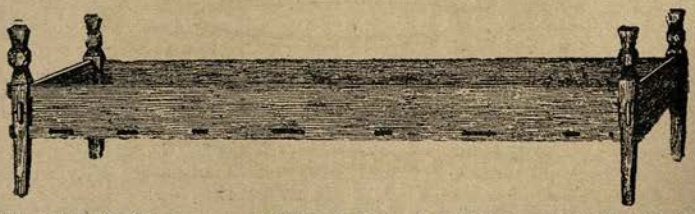

Fig. 748.—Bedstead, upon which the dead warrior had been placed, found in the sepulchral chamber, Gökstad ship.

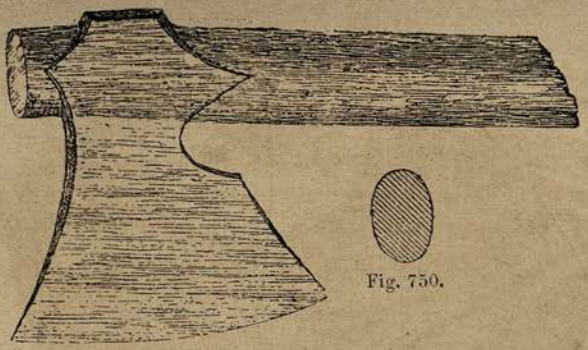

Fig. 750.

Fig. 749.

Axe, ¼ real size, found in mound.

Fig. 751.

Fig. 752.

Fig. 753.

Fig. 754.

Fig. 755.

Fig. 756.

Fig. 757.

Fig. 758.

Fig. 759.

Fig. 760.

Some objects of bronze or iron.—Gökstad ship.

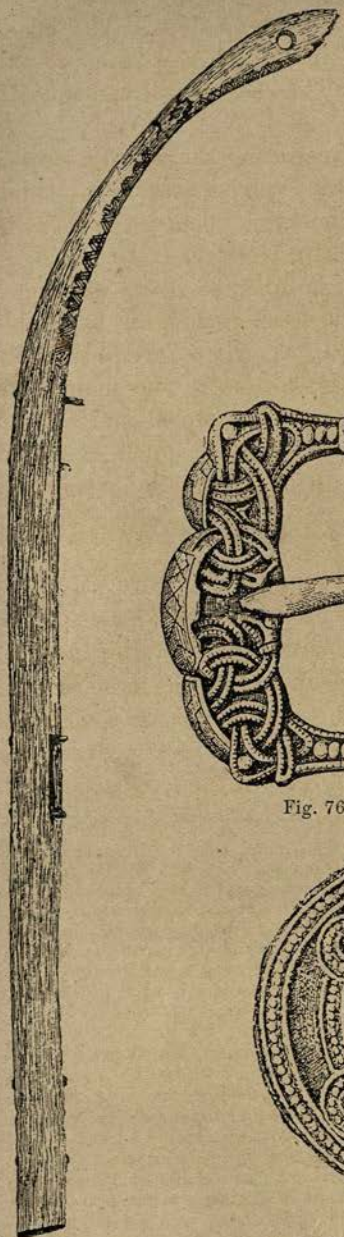

Fig. 761.—Part of a sledge.

Fig. 762.

Fig. 763.

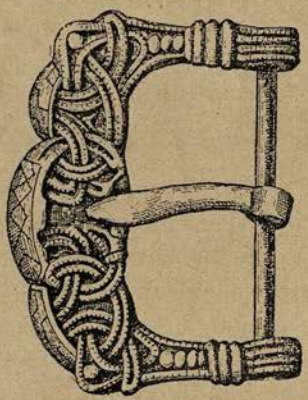

Fig. 765.

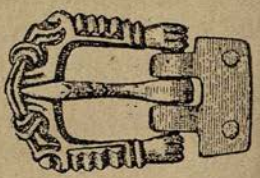

Fig. 764.

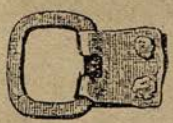

Fig. 766.

Fig. 767.

Some objects of bronze or iron. Gökstad ship. See Vol. ii., Frontispiece and pages 162 to 168.

were also remains of skeletons of several dogs. The bones and feathers of a peacock were inside the ship, the prow of which, like that of the Tune boat, looked towards the sea as if ready for a voyage.

One of the finest discoveries, illustrating the use of a ship as a pyre for the burial of the dead warrior, was in a mound 12 feet high and 92 feet in diameter, opened in 1874 in Moklebust Eids parish, Bergen Stift, Norway.

Among the objects were a vast number of rivets or clinch-nails, and a great number of shield-bosses belonging to shields which adorned the sides of the ship; perhaps several warriors had been burned together. On the bottom of the mound, on the level of the ground, was a layer of charcoal and burned soil intermingled with small pieces of bone, which extended nearly to the sides, but was heaviest in the middle. Separated from this by a layer of light shore-sand was another similar layer.

Inside an oval about 28 feet in length and 14 feet in width these two layers were interspersed with burned bone-splints, clinch-nails, and spikes.[1] In the eastern half of the charcoal layer were found six shield-buckles; and in the western half, shield-buckles scattered about in various ways, sometimes singly, sometimes close to one another. In nearly every one of them lay a clinch-nail, evidently placed there intentionally,

[1] In a large mound at Vold, Borre parish, Norway, was a small vessel about 54 feet long, but in such an imperfect state of preservation that only the clinch-nails with pieces of the planks were left. On the right side lay a horse's skeleton, near which were found remains of a fine bridle and saddle of leather and wood, the mountings of bronze and silver; also fragments of a glass bowl similar to the one found in a mound at Taplon (see p. 319). On the left side lay the skeletons of another horse and of a dog. Above the ship, over the entire mound, was spread a layer of charcoal. Among the objects found were a wrought-iron chain, an iron axe, fragments, and an iron kettle containing ashes, &c. This grave was made in a group of large mounds.

In Tune, Norway, about five miles from the river Glommen, were found in 1867, in a mound, the remains of a viking ship, now in Christiana. This mound lay on a hill not far from the Visterflö, one of the branches of the river Glommen. It was about 24 feet in height, and 500 feet in circumference. Behind the mast lay the unburned corpse of a man, with part of the skeleton of a horse at his side. At the stern were the remains of ring armour.

At Lackalänga, near Lund, there are several earth-mounds. In one of these were found—fragments of a ship, the wood being incrusted with iron rust; an urn of clay, with burned bones and coal; fragments of weapons, &c.; at least 100 clinch-nails of iron, and some other pieces of the same metal, probably originally belonging to a vessel buried in the mound; two larger buckles of iron, like those used on saddles; two stirrups; bits for a bridle, &c.

just as some of the shield-buckles were filled with bone fragments and charcoal.

A little to the west of the centre of the mound was found a large bundle of strongly-bound and intentionally bent weapons and other implements. Right under this bundle was a bridle-bit of iron, and under this, in a hole dug below the natural level of the ground, a whole collection of shield-bosses, which all lay with their convex sides downward, and formed a

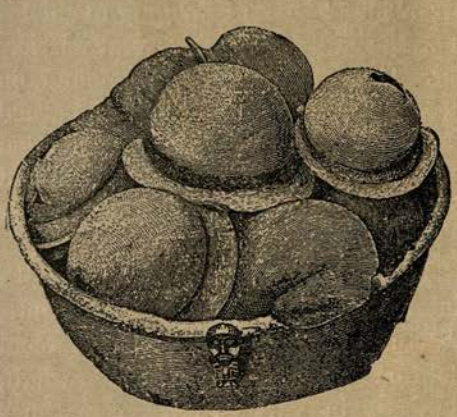

Fig. 768.—Bronze kettle filled with burnt bones mixed with ashes, charcoal, &c., and covered with twelve shield-bosses; nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ real size. Moklebust.

Fig. 769.—Handle of kettle; $\frac{2}{3}$ real size. Moklebust.

covering for a large bronze kettle, represented above, without any other protection but the above-mentioned bosses.

In the middle of the bones lay an arrow-point 6 inches long; also six draughtsmen and three dice of bone. The draughtsmen were ball-shaped; on one side a small part was cut off, so as to give a flat surface, in the middle of which there was a small hole (fitting the pegs in the board itself, as seen from other finds of boards with pegs which were undoubtedly made thus for use at sea, so as to keep the pieces in position).

It seems as if the men of this warrior had dragged his ship ashore, placed the corpse therein with all his weapons and one or more horses, and had adorned it and hung their shields on

its sides, hoisted the sails, and then let the flame consume the whole. The bones were then gathered and placed in the urn,

Fig. 770.—Enamelled bottom of kettle on p. 340 (inside), ⅔ real size; found in a mound, Moklebust.

Fig. 771.—Enamelled bottom (outside), of most brilliant colours, ⅔ real size. Moklebust.

and the twelve shield-bosses placed over it, provisions placed at its side, and the whole covered with a mound. But right over the urn the bridle had been placed, so as to be near at

hand; then his weapons and the remains of the ship's chest, and then the two layers of other remains from the pyre.

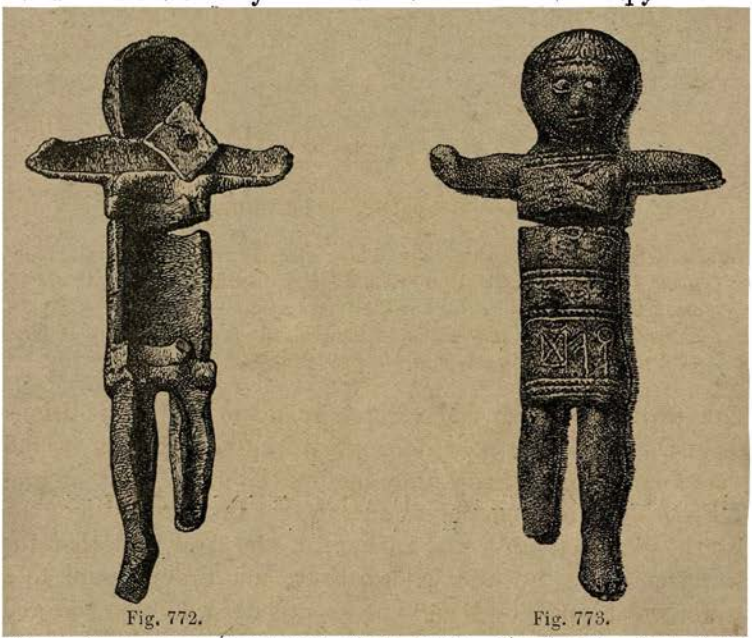

Fig. 772. Fig. 773.

Bronze figure representing a man; with inscription. Found with a bronze kettle containing burnt bones, a double-edged sword bent, several spear-heads, a shield boss, melted pieces of glass, &c.; earlier iron age. Norway.

CHAPTER XX.

RELIGION.—WORSHIP, SACRIFICES, ETC.

Odin's religion—Sun worship—The Three Annual Sacrifices—The Atonement Boar and Bragi Toast—The Victory Sacrifice—Temple Priests—Animals for Sacrifices—Sacrificial ceremonies—Divination—Chips—Drawing of lots—Consecration of land and property—Worship of Thor—Sign of the Hammer—The Svastica—Story of Framar.

THE earlier Edda or Sagas which relate to us the traditions about Odin and the Asar do not give any description of the sacred ceremonies or rites they performed.

From the Ynglinga Saga we learn that the hero Odin of the North sacrificed after the manner of the Asar, and that the sacrifices made by him, Njörd, Frey, and Freyja, were to a power worshipped by them, but we are not told who the god or power was. It probably was in some instances the sun, represented perhaps by the eye of the earlier and mythical Odin of the Völuspa—who, as we have seen, pledged his eye for a drink from the well of Urd; we know that the worship of the sun was widely spread at one period in the history of the world.[1] How the change from the worship of this unknown power to the worship of Odin and the other gods took place we are not told; but it may, we think, be taken for granted that many of the ceremonies and beliefs mentioned in the Sagas were of very ancient origin.

It is only by a study of all the Sagas that we gain a knowledge of the beliefs, religious ceremonies, mode of worship and superstitions of the people of the North, which are often minutely described. It is somewhat difficult for the present

[1] According to Herodotus, i. 212, Tomyres, queen of the Massagetæ, whose son had been taken prisoner by Cyrus, sends to him the following message:—"Restore my son; depart out of the country, unpunished. . . . . But if you do not do this, *I swear by the sun, the Lord of the Massagetæ*, that insatiable as you are, I will glut you with blood."

generation of English people, living in Great Britain and other countries, to realise that no more than eight centuries ago many of their forefathers believed and practised the rites we are going to describe, and that so slow was the march of Christianity, that six or seven hundred years ago the provinces of North-Eastern Prussia, Vindland, Pomerania, &c., whose inhabitants are among the finest in Europe, were still heathen.

It is certain that Odin and some of the Asars were deified and worshipped in all the countries of the North, and with the lapse of time their fame is found to increase. The attributes of Odin were believed to be many.

There were three principal sacrifices a year, at which the people assembled in the chief temples:—*Vetrarblót*, *Midsvetrarblót*, and *Sigrblót*.

"It is their custom to have a sacrifice in the autumn and welcome the winter, another at mid-winter, the third at the beginning of summer; then they welcome the summer. The *Eynir*, *Sparbyggjar*, *Verdælir* and *Skeynir* take part in this. There are twelve men[1] who are the foremost in managing the sacrifice-feasts: this spring Ölvir is to hold the feast; he is now very busy in Mæri, and all provisions needed for the feast are brought thither." (St. Olaf, 115; cf. id. 123).

The first of these, called *Vetrarblót*[2] (Winter sacrifice), which took place on winter nights[3] in the month of Góa, was a sacrifice for a good winter. The 14th of October, which was the ancient month of Góa, is still called winter-night, or the first night of winter.

"That autumn the news was told King Olaf from Thrándheim that the Thrands had had great feasts during the winter nights: there had been great drinking. The King was told that all cups were hallowed to the Asar according to ancient custom.

[1] "East of Tanakvisl (Tanais, Don) in Asia was Asaland, or Asaheim, and the head-burgh (chief town) in the land was called Asgard. In the burgh was a chief called Odin; it was a great sacrificing-place (blótstad). It was customary there that twelve temple-priests (hofgodar) were the foremost, and had charge of the sacrifices and judged between men. They were called *diar* or *drottnar*; all the people were bound to give them service and reverence" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 2).

[2] *Vetrarblót* = winter-sacrifice; from *vetr* = winter, and *blót* = sacrifice. The milky way is called *vetrarbraut* = winter way, because people thought that the appearance of the milky way predicted the course of the winter.

[3] The people counted by nights instead of days.

It was also said that cattle and horses were slaughtered there, the altars reddened with blood, and sacrifices made for the bettering of the year. Also it was said that they all thought it evident that the gods were angry because the men of Hálogaland had become Christians" (St. Olaf, 113. Heimskringla).

The second *Midsvetrarblót* (Mid-winter sacrifice), also called *Jólablót*[1] (Yule sacrifice), was held at mid-winter, or in the beginning of the month of Thór (middle of January), to ensure a good year and peace, and lasted three days; at this feast it was customary to make vows to some of the gods, especially Frey, at Yule-eve. It seems to have been the greatest and most important of all, and many animals were slaughtered at it.[2] The 12th of January is still called mid-winter in Norway.[3] This sacrifice plainly shows that the blessings of peace were appreciated by this warlike race. The Swedes, as we have read, wept over the death of Njörd, for during his time there were good years and peace.

"King Fornjót ruled Jötland (Jötunland) which is called Finnland and Kvenland, that is east of the arm of the sea which goes on the opposite side of Gandvik and which we call Helsingjabotn (Bothnian Gulf). Fornjót had three sons: Hler, whom we call Aegir, Logi, and Kári, who was father of Frosti, the father of Gnár the old; his son was Thorri, who had two sons, Nor and Gor; his daughter was Góa. Thorri was a great sacrificer; he had a great sacrifice every year at mid-winter which was called Thorra blót; from this the month was named (Thorri). One winter Góa disappeared at the Thorri sacrifice; she was searched for and not found. When the month had passed Thorri had a sacrifice in order to find out where Góa was; this they called *Góablót*, but they learnt nothing about her" (Fornaldar Sögur ii., p. 17).

On the Yule-eve it was the custom to lead in procession a boar, consecrated to Frey, called *Sónar gelt* (atonement-boar), and on this those present placed their hands, made solemn vows, and drank the *Bragi* toast.

"King Heidrek had a boar fed; it was as large as the largest bull, but so fine that it seemed as if every hair on it was of

[1] This was also sometimes called Thor's sacrifice.

[2] It seems that at this season other sacrifices than those to Frey were sometimes offered. Cf. Hálfdán the Old. Skaldskaparmal, c. 13.

[3] Cf. Ynglinga Saga, 8; St. Olaf, 115.

gold. He placed one hand on its head and one on its bristles, and made a vow that never should a man transgress so much that he should not have the lawful judgment of his wise men, and these men should take care of the boar, or else he should come with riddles which the king could not guess" (Hervarar Saga, c. 14).

In the evening vows were made, and the atonement-boar (*sónar-golt*) was led forward; the men laid their hands on it, and made vows at the *Bragi* toast" (Helga Kvida Hjörvardssonar).[1]

"In the winter the foster-brothers (Ingólf and Leif) made a feast for the sons of the Jarl (Herstein, Hástein and Hólmstein, the sons of Atli-jarl). At this feast Hólmstein made a vow that he would marry Helga, the daughter of Örn, or no other woman. Men disliked this vow, but Leif was seen to become red (in his face), and he and Hólmstein were no friends when they parted at the feast" (Landnáma i., c. 3.)

"Thórodd was with another man at Thórar's. There was a great Yule-feast, the ale being provided by each one himself. There were many besides in the hamlet, who all drank together during Yule. A short way off there was another hamlet. There the brother-in-law of Thórar, a powerful and wealthy man, lived; he had a grown-up son. They were to drink during the half of the Yule at each other's farm, and first at Thórar's" (St. Olaf, c. 151).

"One winter at Yuletide, when the people were assembled to drink, Finn said: 'Vows will be made in many places this evening, where it is not better to be than here; now I vow that I will serve the king who is the highest and in all things surpasses others'" (Fornmanna Sögur ii., ch. 201.)

The third, called *Sigrblót* (Victory sacrifice), for luck and victory, occurred in the beginning of spring, about the middle of April, being fixed at that time of the year because warfare and most Viking expeditions took place in the summer. It was in honour of Odin, to whom alone, as we see from the Sagas, sacrifices were made for victory.[2]

In those warlike days sacrifices relating to war were the most important, for the life of the nation depended upon victory, and they were consequently foremost among the people.

[1] Cf. also Hörd's Saga and Hervarar Saga, c. 14. The boar was consecrated to Frey.

[2] Cf. also Hakon Adalsteinsfostri's Saga, c. 15; Olaf Tryggvason (Hkr.), c. 28.

"Dag, son of Högni, made a sacrifice to Odin, to avenge his father (who was slain by Helgi); Odin lent his spear to him. Dag met his brother-in-law Helgi at the place called Fjoturlund, he pierced him with the spear, and Helgi fell there" (Helga kvida Hundingsbana II).[1]

"In Sweden it was an old custom, from heathen times, that the chief sacrifice (höfudblót) should be at Uppsalir in the month of Goi, and that the sacrifice should be for peace and victory for the King, and men should come thither from all over the Swedish realm" (St. Olaf, c. 76, Heimskringla).

When Hakon jarl returned from Denmark, he ravaged both shores.

"When he had sailed eastward as far as the Gauta Skerries (rocky islets), he went ashore and made a great sacrifice. Two ravens, which croaked loudly, flew towards him, and the jarl thought that Odin must have accepted the sacrifice and that he would have a good chance of victory. He thereupon set fire to his ships and burned them all, and went into the country with his men with warlike intentions" (Fornmanna Sögur, vol. i.).

Sacrifices.—The superintendents of the sacrifices as we have seen were in the earliest times in the North the *Hofgodi (temple priests)*, who were called Diar and Drotnar, and were held in great esteem and veneration by the people; but in later times temporal rulers were also priests, and had charge of the sacrifices.[2]

"All over Sweden men paid taxes to Odin; one penning (piece of money) for every nose; and he had to defend their land against war; and sacrifice for a good year" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 8).

The animals for sacrifice, which were generally oxen, horses, sheep, boars, and falcons, fattened in order to be of large size and fine appearance, were slaughtered by the temple priest, and in later times, as a rule, in front of the idols.[3] Sometimes the superintendence of the sacrificing feast alternated between a certain number of the foremost bœndr[4] of the fylki.[5]

"It happened in Sweden that the bull which was to be sacrificed was old and so well fed that it was vicious; when

[1] Cf. Hakon Adalsteinsfostri's Saga, c. 15. Snorri's Olaf Tryggvason, c. 28.
[2] See chapter on Godis, p. 525.
[3] Olaf Tryggvason in Fms. ii. 173.
[4] See p. 496, a landowner.
[5] St. Olaf 115, Heimskringla.

men wanted to capture it it ran into the woods and became furious" (Ynglinga, ch. 30).

The people believed that good or bad years were often caused by faith, or want of faith, in the Asa creed; a year was good when their chiefs sacrificed much, bad when they were not zealous sacrificers.[1]

The ceremony was divided into two parts: first the slaughtering of animals, and reddening of the temple and altars with blood—probably on the first night; then the sacrificial feast.

In some places the expenses[2] of these feasts were defrayed by the godi, who in return had the care of the temple possessions and of the temple tolls:[3] in the earliest times people had to pay taxes—a custom said to have been instituted by Odin.

It was the custom to cook the flesh of the slaughtered animals in large kettles hanging over these fires along the floor of the temple. The people then assembled to eat it seated along the walls, and the filled horns were carried between or round the fires, which were probably regarded as holy, the person having charge of the feast consecrating the horns and the meat (*i.e.*, making the sign of the hammer of Thor over them). First was drunk the horn of Odin, for victory and power; then Thor's horn by those who trusted in their own strength and power; Njörd's and Frey's horn for good years and peace; Bragi's when solemn vows were made; and the memorial toast for dead kinsmen which was proposed by the sacrificing priest.[4]

Of the solemn ceremonies which took place at the slaying of the living animals we have no description, but the blood from the sacrifices of either animals or human beings was collected into a bowl (*Hlaut-bolli*), generally of copper, which had its place in the temple at the principal altar. The altars and walls of the temple, and the people and idols, were spattered with blood with a kind of broom called *Hlaut-tein* (blood-twigs).

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[1] Ynglinga, 47. Snorri's Olaf Tryggvason, 16.

[2] Sometimes the expenses devolved on the king, at others the feasts were provided for by the food and ale brought by those in attendance (Hakon Adalsteinsfostri, 16, 18). How far people went for sacrifices is seen in Landnáma v., 8.

[3] Eyrbyggja, 4, 10.

[4] In Herraud's Saga, ch. 12, the toasts are given in different order. The first toast is dedicated to Thor; then one to all the Asar; then one to Odin; and lastly, one to Frey.

"Sigurd Hlada-jarl was a very great sacrificer, as his father Hakon had been; he kept up all the sacrificing-feasts in Thrandheim on the king's behalf. It was an old custom when a sacrifice was to take place that all the bœndr should come to the temple, and take with them the provisions needed while the feast lasted. Every man was to bring ale; there were also slaughtered all kinds of small cattle, as well as horses. All the blood which came therefrom was called *hlaut* (sacrifice blood), the vessels for holding it *hlaut-bowls*, and the twigs, *hlaut-twigs*. With them the altars had to be reddened all over, and also the walls of the temple inside and outside: then the men were to be sprinkled with them, but the flesh had to be boiled for people to eat.

"Fires were to burn on the middle of the temple floor, and kettles to be put on them; the drinking-horns had to be carried around the fire. The chief who made the feast had to consecrate the horns, and all the sacrifice-food. The horn (toast) of Odin must be drunk first, for the victory and power of their king; and then the horn of Njörd and Frey, for a good year and peace. Many ussd to drink Bragi's horn next to these. Men also drank horns for those of their kinsmen who had been great men; these were called *minni* (memorial horns). Sigurd jarl was a most open-handed man; he did a very famous deed, as he held a great sacrificing feast at Hladir, and himself alone paid all the costs" (Hakon Adalsteinfostri (Hkr.), ch. 16).

It was customary to try and find out the decrees of fate or the will of the gods by a kind of divination or casting of lots with chips dipped in the blood of sacrifices; the most common way of making inquiry was by *Blótspán* (sacrifice chip) and by lots (*hlut*)—both methods of casting lots, but differently performed—the former of which apparently meant the throwing these sacred chips of wood.

Mention is made of the use of scales with lots in them, on one side favourable, on the other side unfavourable; if the favourable one went higher up than the other, it was a good omen.

Einar, an Icelander, and one of Hakon jarl's scalds, wanted to leave him and join Sigvaldi his foe at the battle of the Jomsviking, for he thought he had not as much honour with the jarl as formerly.

"When Hakon saw that he was going, he shouted for him to come and speak with him, and so he did; the jarl took two

scales of burnished silver, gilt all over; with them were two weights, one of gold, the other of silver, on each of which a likeness was made; they were called *lots* and were of the kind customary with men. Strong qualities were in them, and the jarl used them for all things of importance to him. He used to put them on the scales and tell what each of them should signify to him. When it went well, and the one he wanted came up, the lot in the scale which signified what he wanted never kept quiet, but moved on the scale and made a tinkling sound. These costly things he gave to Einar, who became merry and glad, and desisted from going to Sigvald. From this he got a name and was afterwards called Skálaglam = 'scale tinkle'" (Jomsviking Saga).

"Ingjald gathered men and went against Granmar and his son-in-law, Hjörvard; he had a far larger host than the two others. The battle was hard, and after a short time the chiefs of Fjadrundaland, Vestr-Gautland, Nœriki, and Attundaland (they were with Ingjald), and all the host from these lands, fled. Ingjald received many wounds, and with difficulty escaped to his ships; his foster-father Svipdag the Blind fell there, with both his sons, Gautvid and Hulvid. Ingjald went back to Uppsalir dissatisfied with the expedition; he saw that the hosts from the kingdoms he had conquered were unfaithful. After this there was a great war between the kings; but when it had lasted some time the friends of both brought about a reconciliation. The kings appointed a meeting, met, and all three made peace, which was to stand while they lived; this was bound with oaths and pledges. The next spring Granmar went to Uppsalir to sacrifice for peace, as was the custom towards summer. The sacrifice-chip fell so as to show that he would not live long" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 42).

Marks were cut on pieces of wood or other material, and each person had his mark. Sometimes the places at feasts were assigned by lot, and lots were also drawn for human sacrifice. The images of some of the gods were sometimes marked on the lots.[1]

"At the advice of powerful men it was agreed that the kings should draw lots as to which of them should hereafter rule, and the *lots were to be cut* and put in the folds of a cloak. Then Eystein asked his brother King Olaf with whom he sided in this matter. He answered: 'We have long kept our love for each other and agreed well; thy will in regard to the

[1] Hallfredar Saga.

rule of the land and the laws, King Eystein, is also mine. Eystein said: 'I advise thee, King Sigurd, to cut the third lot for the cloak, for King Olaf, like ourselves, is the son of Magnús.' Sigurd answered: 'Men can see that every expedient has now been tried, for thou wantest to have two lots where I have one, but I will not deprive King Olaf of any honour.' Then the lots were put into the cloak, and the lot of King Sigurd came up, and he was to rule" (Sigurd Jorsalafari's Saga, c. 21).

It seems to have been the custom among zealous sacrificers to consecrate their lands and property to the gods, without however denying themselves the use and enjoyment thereof. That this was customary all over the North we may conclude from the mass of names of farms, villages, &c., named after the gods Odin, Frey, and Thor.

In their colonies the people followed the same custom of dedicating their settlements or lands to the gods, and we find ample proof of this in England, Normandy, Iceland, the Orkneys and Faroe Islands.

Among the gods most worshipped besides Odin were Frey, Thor and Njörd.

We find from the Sagas that Frey was worshipped equally in Norway, Iceland, and Sweden, and no doubt also in Denmark.

One summer when Hallfred and his followers came from Iceland to Norway, and asked for tidings, they were told that there had been a change of chiefs in Norway; that Hakon Jarl was dead, and Olaf Tryggvason had come instead with a new creed and commandments.

"Then the men on the ship agreed to make a vow; they vowed to give much property to Frey if they got a fair wind to Sweden, but to Thor or Odin if they got to Iceland; if they should not get a fair wind to sail, the King should have his way." They never got a fair wind, and had to sail to Thrándheim (Hallfredar Saga, c. 5).

"When Hrafnkel had settled at Adalbol (Iceland) he had a great sacrifice. He had a large temple made. He loved Frey more than other gods, and gave him one-half of all his most precious things. He settled in the whole valley and gave lands to the people, but wanted to rule them and became *godi*

(=temple-priest and judge) over them. After this his name was lengthened and he was called Frey's godi."

"Hrafnkel owned one valuable thing which he loved more than any other. This was a horse with a dark stripe along its back which he called Freyfaxi; he devoted to his friend Frey one-half of this horse, and loved it so much that he made a vow to slay any man who rode it against his will" (Hrafnkel Freysgodi's Saga).

Fig. 774.—Runic stone, with hammer, at Stenqvista Södermanland, Sweden). Stones with a similar-shaped hammer have been found in several places in Denmark and Sweden.

Thorkel had been forced to sell his land to Glum. Before he departed from Thverá he went to the temple of Frey, leading thither an ox, and said:

"Frey, who long hast been my patron, and hast accepted many gifts from me and rewarded me well, now I give this ox to thee, so that Glum may leave Thveráland as much against his will as I do now; let me see some token whether thou acceptest it from me or not. At this the ox bellowed loud and fell dead, which Thorkel liked well, and he was less sad because he thought his prayer was heard" (Vigaglum's Saga, c. 9).

Thor[1] like Frey was invoked. The poetical and figurative names given to him are far from being as numerous and beautiful as those given to Odin. It was customary, at least in the earliest times,

[1] In the earliest times Thor was the great enemy of the Jötnar. He was called upon by wrestlers also (Gunnlaug Ormstunga, 10), and showed his anger by causing loss of property (Flóamanna Saga, c. 20).

to make the sign of the hammer at burials and marriages.[1] This hammer was called Mjollnir, and (Lokasenna) when Thor is taunted by Loki, he answers each time by these lines—

"Be thou silent, coward,
My Thrudhamar (mighty hammer)
Mjollnir[2]
Shall take thy talk from thee."

But that the svastica was emblematic of the sign of Thor, and had been adopted as such by the people of the North, is only an hypothesis, for it is also found in Greece and other countries; there is nothing in the Sagas to prove the assertion.

"Asbjörn Reyrketilsson and his brother Steinfinn took up land above Krossá, and east of Fljot. Steinfinn lived at Steinfinnstadir, and no man has descended from him. Asbjörn consecrated his land to Thor, and called it Thorsmörk" (Landnama v., 2 ch.).

The hammer as an ornament is not uncommon, and may have been used as an amulet, as is seen on several runic stones (see p. 352).

Even Christians called upon Thor for help in sea voyages and difficulties.

"Eyvind, from Sweden, went on expeditions westward, and in Ireland married Raförta, daughter of the Irish king Kjarval. She bore him a son, Helgi, and they sent him to the Hebrides to be fostered. Two winters later they came back to the Hebrides, and did not recognise him, as he had been starved. They therefore called him Helgi the Lean, and took him away. He was after this fostered in Ireland, and when grown up became a highly honoured man, and was married to Thórun Hyrna, daughter of Ketil Flatnose. They had many children; Hrólf and Ingjald were their sons. Helgi the Lean went to Iceland with his wife and children. He had a very mixed creed; he believed in Christ, but nevertheless invoked Thor for help in sea voyages and in difficulties. When he saw Iceland, he inquired from Thor where he should take up land. The answer told him to go to the north coast of Iceland" (Landnama iii., 12).[3]

[1] Thrymskvida. The bridegroom and bride were to be marked with the holy sign. (Vol. II., p. 12.)

[2] St. Olaf's Saga, 44. "He was marked after Thor and hammer in the hand."

[3] In the account of Fornmanna Sögur about the battle of Svold, Eirik jarl is said to have had Thor in the prow of his ship. "He took it away and put the cross instead, which he did on the advice of Olaf Tryggvason," otherwise he would not get the victory.

Worship of Njörd.—Njörd[1] was also worshipped, though we have no account of sacrifices made to him; but the formulary of the oath, "So help me Frey, Njörd, and the Almighty As (Odin)!" shows the existence of his worship. Egil calls upon him and the two other gods to drive Eirik Blood-axe from the land.[2]

Fig. 775.—½ real size.

Fig. 776.—Thor's hammer. In a field. Läby, Uppland. Real size.

Fig. 777.—Thor's hammer and chain of silver.—Bredsätra, Öland. Real size.

There were men who did not believe in and did not worship Odin, as may be seen from the following example:—

"Then came to Hrafnista, Framar, a viking king; he was a sacrificer and iron did not wound him. He demanded in marriage Hrafnhild, the daughter of Ketil Hæng. Ketil answered that she should choose a husband herself. She refused Framar. Therefore Framar challenged Ketil to *holmganga* at Arhaug, on the first day of Yule, and said he should

[1] In Vafthrudnismál, Njörd is said to have ruled over many temples by the old Asgard.

[2] Cf. Egil's Saga, c. 58.

be every man's nithing if he did not come. On Yule-eve he came to Arhaug. Framar and the men of the land sacrificed for good years.

"Bödmód, the son of Framar, after inviting Ketil to his hall, mentioned Odin. When he named Odin, Ketil got angry, for he did not believe in him; and sung a song:—

Odin worship
Did I never,
Though long I have lived;
I know that Framar
Will fall sooner than
This high head.

Twice the sword of Ketil did not bite; the third time it cut Framar from the shoulder down to the loins. Then Framar sung:—

There is courage in Hæng,
Dravendil is sharp,
It bit the word of Odin
As if it were nothing;
Now the father of Baldr proved false
It is unsafe to trust him;
Enjoy well thy hands,
Here we shall part.

Framar thereupon died, and Ketil went home" (Ketil Hæng's Saga, c. 5).

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CHAPTER XXI.

RELIGION.—ALTARS, TEMPLES, HIGH-SEAT PILLARS, ETC.

The most primitive form of altar—The earliest Asa temple in the North—The temples in Norway and Denmark—Size and materials of temples—Their magnificence—Temple priests—Support of temple—Holiness and sacredness of temples—High-seat pillars—Sacred pegs.

THE *hörg* was a sacred altar, built of stones, often mentioned in the Eddas and Sagas, but never described, and was quite distinct from the *stalli*, or altar. Perhaps it was an enclosed structure, or was built over a sacrificing mound or upon some elevation. Its primitive form makes it undoubtedly of far greater antiquity than the temple, though both were retained as we see in later times by the people in their worship. It seems to have been especially used for sacrifices to the Alfar and Asar;[1] and from the words of Freyja to Hyndla, who was her friend, when speaking of Ottar, we find that a hörg had been raised to her by the latter, and sacrifices made to her.

He made me a hörg
Reared of stones;
Now have these stones
Become *gler*.[2]

He reddened it in
Fresh ox blood.
Ottar believed
Always in Asynjur.
[Hyndluljód, st. 10.]

The first temple belonging to the Asa creed which Odin is fabled to have established was at Sigtuna; afterwards the most celebrated of all the temples in the North was that of Upsala, but unfortunately we have no description of it in the

[1] From Vafthrúdnir's answer to Odin about Njörd's origin we find that he ruled over temples and hörg. (Vafthrúdnismál, 38.)

[2] Shining like glass. Amber is called gler; and in *Sigrdrifumál*, st. 17, we find that runes were written on gler or amber.

The hörg is also mentioned in Völuspa, 7; Helgakvida Hjorvardssonar, 4; Landnáma ii. 16; Elder Gulathing's Law, ch. 29; Orvar Odd, p. 29; *Hervarar Saga*, 1.

Sagas; its fame was so great that on special occasions people from all over the North came to it.

The two principal temples in Norway were in Hladir in Thrandheim, and in Gudbrandsdal.

"Gudbrand of Dalir was a great friend of Hakon Jarl. They owned a temple which was the second for size in Norway, the largest being at Hladir (in Thrandheim). The former was never unlocked except when the Jarl came thither" (Njala, 87).

The largest one in Denmark was in Hleidra (Zeeland), but unfortunately in this case also the Sagas give no description. Other temples of less repute were also built.

The *Hof* or temple was often of large size, and the Sagas give us examples of their appearance, some of them being of great splendour; they were generally if not always rectangular buildings,[1] with a rounded addition at one end like the apse of a church. Some had two parts: an inner or more sacred one, where the images of the gods were placed; and an outer one, where the sacrificial feasts were held. At the *blotveitsla* or sacrificial feast the people seem to have remained standing, high seats existing only for the *blotgodi* (sacrificing priest). At the farther end the *God* (god-idols) stood on their *stall* (altar).

"Olaf sailed to Hladir, and had the temple broken down, and all the property and ornaments taken out of it and off the gods. He took a large gold ring from the temple door, which Hakon Jarl had made, and then had the temple burnt.

"Olaf sent the large gold ring which he had taken from the temple door to Queen Sigrid, Storrada (the Proud) in Sweden (he wanted to marry her). She had it broken, and brass was found inside. She got angry, and said that Olaf was likely to be false in more things than this" (Olaf Tryggvason, 65, 66).

Sometimes these buildings were magnificently furnished and adorned with costly and precious metals; their walls were hung with tapestries, and otherwise ornamented,[2] and on the door was a golden ring.[3] Many of them must have been the

[1] See Landnama v., 2; Hrafnkel Freysgodis Saga, pp. 4–6.

[2] Olaf Tryggvason Heimskringla, ch. 65, 66.

[3] Kjalnesinga, 2; Droplaugarsona, Saga about Bessi temple, Landnáma v. 12.

property of powerful and wealthy bœndr,[1] as may be inferred from the fact that some chiefs when they left the country tore them down and took them away, together with the temple mould on which they stood, which was holy.

"Ketilbjörn, a famous man in Norway, went to Iceland, and dwelt at Mosfell. He was so rich in personal property that he told his sons to make a cross-beam of silver in the temple which they were building. As they would not, he with his thrall Haki and his bondmaid Bót drove the silver up on the mountain with two oxen; they hid it so that it has never been found since; then he killed Haki in Hakaskard, and Bót in Bótarskard" (Landnama v. 12).

"Thorhad the old was temple-priest in Thrandheim, in Mœri. He wished to go to Iceland, but first took down the temple, and carried with him the temple mould and the altars. He came into Stödvar-fjord and made the whole fiord as holy as the temple place in Mœri, and allowed nothing to be slain there except homestead cattle. He lived there all his life afterwards; the Stödfirdings are descended from him"[2] (Landnama).

The *hof-godi* or temple-priest was occasionally a woman.

"Steinvör was a priestess, and took care of the head temple; to this all bœndr had to pay temple tax. Steinvör went to the chief Broddhelgi, for she was related to him, and told him her trouble, that Thorleif, the Christian, did not pay temple tax like other men. Broddhelgi said he would take up this case for her against Thorleif."[3]

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[1] Landowner (see p. 496).

[2] Adam of Bremen about 1070 writes that not far from *Sictona* (Sigtuna) is the temple *Ubsola*, where were the three gods, *Thor*, *Wodan* and *Fricco* (Frey). What he says about this temple makes it evident that not only its roof but also the whole inside of the structure was covered with gold plates. Further he says that close to it there was a large tree, which no one knew, and which stretched its branches far out, and was always green, as well as a spring, near which the heathen made their sacrifices, and wherein a live man was thrown; the people believed that his wishes would be fulfilled, in case he sank; also a golden chain went around the temple, and hung from the roof.

[3] Saxo writes that the Danish king Halfdan journeyed to Upsala in order to find out the cause of his daughter's sterility, and was answered that he must first satisfy the spirit of his brother, whom he had unwittingly slain; this he did, and then she, in accordance with the promise of the oracle, bore Harald Hilditönn.

At the present old Upsala church there were discovered the foundations of an old building, a mass of coals, molten copper and silver pieces, with small traces of pure gold, as well as a rusty nail with a little gold on it, and finally skulls of pigs and hawks, and cheek-bones and teeth of horses, all of which tend to show that the old heathen temple of Upsala, so famous during pagan times, stood there. (Verelius Notæ in epist. def. Shefferi, p. 16.)

A tax, as we have seen, was said to have been imposed in Odin's time for the support of the temple; in the time of Frey a change took place, according to the sagas, and certain lands and properties in the several districts called *Uppsala-Aud* (Uppsala wealth) were set apart for this purpose; but in later times again, in Norway at least, and probably in other parts of the North, the bœndr had to pay taxes for the support of the temples, some of which seem to have been the private property of the godi.

The temples were considered so holy that any one damaging them or entering them armed was declared an outlaw, and no one who had committed an offence punishable by law was allowed to enter; such person was called *Varg i Veum* (wolf in the sanctuary). The grove or fields surrounding the temples were often regarded as inviolate, so that no act of violence would be permissible within their precincts. This was expressed by the ancient name of *Ve* (sanctuary, sacred place), which was extended so as to embrace the *Thing*-place, which was also regarded as sacred, while the *Thing* was going on.

"Ingimund went into the temple, and before he was aware of it Rafn ran in with a sword. Ingimund turned towards him and said, 'It is not the custom to bring weapons into the temple, and thou wilt turn the wrath of the gods against thee; such a thing is impossible unless it is atoned for'" (Vatnsdœla, c. 17).

"Búi went to the temple, and when he arrived there, saw that the enclosure as well as the temple was unlocked. He entered and perceived that Thorstein lay on his face in front of Thor. Búi walked silently until he came to Thorstein, and grasped his knees with one hand and his shoulders with the other in such a manner that he lifted him and struck his head so hard against a stone that his brains were scattered over the floor; he died immediately. Búi carried him out and threw him near the fence of the enclosure, and entered the temple again. He took the sacred fire, and, kindling lights, carried them around the temple and set the hangings on fire. The fire quickly caught one thing after the other, and in a short time the temple was in flames. He went out and locked both the temple and the enclosure, and threw the keys into the fire and departed. Thorgrim Godi awoke in the morning and saw

the temple burning; he called on his people, men and women, to run with water vessels and save it; he also called upon his son, Thorstein, but he was nowhere to be found. When they reached the gate of the enclosure it was not easy to pass, for it was locked, and the keys were nowhere to be found; they were obliged to break open the door, for the fence was so high that they could not get over it. Entering the enclosure, they saw Thorstein there dead; the temple was also locked, and nothing in it could be saved. Hooks were brought and the temple was pulled down, and thus part of the temple was saved" (Kjalnesinga Saga, c. 4).

For this Búi was outlawed by Harald Fairhair, but was subsequently forgiven.

"King Beli ruled over Sygna-fylki (in Norway); he had three children; Helgi and Hálfdán were his sons, and Ingibjörg his daughter. Ingibjörg was fair-looking and wise; she was the foremost of the king's children. On the shore west of the fjord there was a large bœr,[1] called Baldr's hagi (Baldr's field or enclosure), which was a place of peace,[2] where a large temple stood, surrounded by a high wooden fence; there were many gods, though Baldr was most worshipped. The heathen[3] men were so careful about the temple that neither man nor beast was to be hurt there; men were not allowed to stay with women there" (Fridthjóf's Saga, 1).[4]

"When Fridthjóf had left Norway the kings held a *Thing*, and outlawed him from all their lands, and took to themselves all his possessions. King Hálfdán settled at Framnes, and rebuilt the burned part of the farm; and they repaired the whole of Baldr's hagi, but it was a long time before the fire was extinguished. King Helgi disliked most of all that the gods had been burned. It was very costly to build Baldr's hagi again as good as it was. King Helgi then resided at Syrstrond" (Fridthjóf's Saga, c. 10).

The fact that some of the old temples were a subject of pilgrimage to those who had emigrated from the land is further proof of the veneration paid to them.

"Lopt Ormsson went from Gaulardal in Norway to Iceland when young, and took up land along the Thjórsá river. Lopt

[1] This implies that in the sacred precincts there were several buildings.
[2] Gridastad means place of truce.
[3] The writer or copyist seems to have been a Christian.
[4] Fridthjóf means the thief of peace, the one who steals or destroys peace.

went to Norway every third summer for himself and for his mother's brother Flosi, to sacrifice in the temple which his grandfather Thorbjörn had guarded" (Landnama v., ch. 8).

Inside the principal door of the temple stood the high-seat pillars, which were highly venerated, and in which were placed the so-called *reginnaglar* (sacred pegs). It was the custom for families to take these pillars when they left their old home for Iceland, and when at sea to throw them overboard, and settle where they came ashore: they, the timbers of the temple, and the mould under the altars of the gods, were considered sacred.

"The summer that Ingólf and Hjörleif went to settle in Iceland, Harald Fairhair had been king in Norway for twelve years. There had passed from the beginning of this world six thousand and seventy-three winters; but from the birth of our Lord, eight hundred and seventy-four winters.

"They sailed together till they saw Iceland, and then separated. When Ingólf saw Iceland, he threw overboard his high-seat pillars for luck, saying that he would settle where the pillars went ashore.

"Ingólf took up his abode where his high-seat pillars had come to land; this was at Reykjarvik, and there the high-seat pillars still remain in a hall"[1] (Landnama).

"Thórólf Mostrarskegg made a great sacrifice, and inquired from his beloved friend Thor whether he should reconcile himself to the King (Harald Fairhair), or go away from the country and seek other fate. The answer pointed out to him Iceland. Thereupon he got a large seagoing ship, and made it ready for the Iceland journey, and took with him his household and live stock. Many of his friends went on the journey with him. He took down the temple and carried with him most of the timbers which had been in it, and also the earth and mould from under the altar on which Thor had sat. Thereupon he sailed out to sea with fair winds, reached the land, and went along the south coast westward past Reykjanes. Then the fair wind ceased, and they saw that large fjords went into the land. Thórólf threw overboard his high-seat pillars, which had been standing in the temple; the image of Thor was carved on one of them. He declared that he would live in Iceland, at the place where Thor landed them. As soon as they left the ship they drifted to the western fjord. Then

[1] Cf. also Landnama, iv. 5; Kormak's Saga, 11.

there came a breeze; they sailed westward past Snjófellsnes and into the fjord; they saw it was very broad and long, with very high mountains on both sides. Thórólf named it Breidifjord (broad fjord). He landed on the southern side, nearly at its middle, and laid the ship in the bay, which they afterwards called Hofs-vag. They searched the shore, and found on the point of a ness north of the bay that Thor had there landed the pillars. The ness was called Thórsness. After this Thórólf went with fire around the land which he took up from Stafá (river) to the river which he called Thórsá, and there settled his ship's crew. He raised a large house at Hofs-vag which he called Hofstadir. There he had a large temple built; there was a door on the side wall, near the one end; inside stood the high-seat pillars, and pegs were in them; they were called *regin naglar*. Inside this there was a great *peace-place;* in the innermost part of the temple was a room like the choirs in churches now, and a platform was raised on the middle of the floor like an altar, on which there lay a jointless ring weighing two ounces, and on this all oaths had to be sworn. The temple priest had to wear that ring on his arm at all meetings" (Eyrbyggja, c. 4).

After Ingimund had departed from Norway for Iceland he landed at Borgarfjord. He was met by Grim and Hámund, the former of whom invited him to remain with him, and take whatever he wanted, whether real or portable property. For the offer Ingimund thanked him, but said he would only remain over winter, and in the spring would go to look for the place he intended to settle on. The following summer he wandered about, and in the autumn took winter quarters in a valley called Vididal, at a place which was afterwards named Ingimundarhöll.

"When spring came and the snow began to melt on the mountain sides Ingimund said, 'I should like some men to go up on a high mountain to look if there is less snow in other places, for I do not think we will settle in this valley, for it is not an equal bargain.' They went up on a high mountain and saw far away. They returned and told him that the mountains on the north-west were very snowless, and soon they were all on their way thither. As they approached the Vatnsdal valley Ingimund recognised it from the description given by the Fins; and when they came to the Vatnsdal river Vigdis said 'I must rest a little while, for I feel sick.' She gave birth to a girl who was named Thordis, after Ingimund's

mother. He then said that the place should be called Thordisarholt. He chose a site for his residence in a very beautiful grove, raised a large temple, one hundred feet in length; and when he was digging holes for his high-seat pillars he found the image of Frey of silver, as he had been foretold. Then he said, 'It is indeed true that you cannot go against fate, but nevertheless I like this. This farm shall be called Hof (temple)'" (Vatnsdæla, 15).[1]

Lodmund the old, a Norwegian from Voss, went to Iceland:

"He threw his high-seat pillars overboard at sea, and said he would settle where they were driven ashore. They landed in the eastern fjords, and he settled in Lodmundarfjord, where he lived that winter. When he heard that his high-seat pillars were on the south coast he carried on board the ship all his property, hoisted the sail, laid himself down, and bade no one be so bold as to utter his name. After he had been lying down for a short time a loud crash was heard, and it was seen that a large land-slip had come down upon the farm where Lodmund had dwelt. He rose and said, 'It is my imprecation that the ship which hereafter sails out from here shall never come undamaged back from the sea.' He took up land where the high-seat pillars had come ashore" (Landnama iv. 5).[2]

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[1] Cf. Landnama, iii., c. 2, 7.

[2] Cf. also Vatnsdæla, 12. Landnama, i., c. 10. Ondvegissula = high-seat pillar.

CHAPTER XXII.

RELIGION.—HUMAN SACRIFICES.

Sacrifices to Odin—Human sacrifices resorted to on momentous occasions—Kings sacrificed—Children sacrificed by their fathers—Sacrifice to prolong life—Warriors given to Odin after battle—Sacrificing springs—Sacrifices on Thor's stone—Sacrificing place at Blomsholm—Sacrificing mound—The blood-eagle sacrifice—Giving oneself to Odin on a sick-bed—The earliest account of human sacrifice in the North—The abandonment of human sacrifices.

BESIDES the sacrifices already mentioned others were held when the aid of the gods was required; the most important of them were human sacrifices, which were offered in times of great calamity, such as famine, or in order to avoid some great evils, or to obtain victory, or for some other weighty reasons.

"At this time occurred a very bad year in Reidgotaland, and it looked as if the land would become a waste. Lots were then thrown by the wise men, and they threw the sacrificing-chip; the answer came that there never would be a good year in Reidgotaland until the highest-born boy in the land should be sacrificed. A *Thing* was summoned, and all agreed that Angantýr, son of Heidrek, was the foremost there, because of his kin, but nobody dared to mention it. Then they resolved to submit this question to the decision of King Höfund in Glœsisvöll (Heidrek's father); the most high-born were to be chosen for the journey, but everybody declined. King Harald and many others asked King Heidrek to assist in deciding this question, and he consented. He at once had a ship made ready, on which he went with many renowned men, and sailed to Risaland. When King Höfund heard of his arrival he at once wanted to have him slain, but Queen Hervör remonstrated, and so managed that they were quite reconciled. Then Heidrek told his errand and asked for his decision, and Höfund said that his son was the foremost in the land. At this King Heidrek changed colour and thought the case became difficult; he asked his father to give him advice how to save the life of the boy. Höfund said: 'When thou goest home to Reidgotaland, thou must summon the men to a Thing from thy possessions

and those of King Harald, and there pronounce thy decision about thy son. Then thou shalt ask how they will reward thee if thou allowest him to be sacrificed. Say that thou art a foreigner, and that thou wilt lose thy land and people if this is to take place. Then thou shalt make it a condition that one-half of the men of King Harald present at the Thing shall become thy men or else thou wilt not give up thy son, and this shall be confirmed by oaths. If thou dost get this I need not give thee advice as to what thou shalt do thereafter.' Heidrek thereupon took leave of his father and mother, and sailed away from Risaland. When Heidrek returned to Reidgotaland he summoned a Thing, to which he spoke thus: 'It is the decision of my father, King Höfund, that my son is the foremost here in the land, and is to be chosen for sacrifice; but in return for this, I want to have power over one-half of those of King Harald's men who have come to this Thing, and you must pledge me this.' That was done, and they came into his host; then the bœndr asked that he should deliver his son to them, and thus improve their season. But after the hosts had been divided, Heidrek asked his men to take oaths of allegiance. This they did, and swore that they would follow him out of the land and in the land to wherever he wanted. Then he said: 'I think that Odin gets the value of a boy if, instead of him, he gets King Harald and his son and his entire host.' He bid them raise his standard to attack King Harald and slay him and all his men. The war horns were sounded and the attack made. The battle soon turned against King Harald and his men, for they had far fewer men and were unprepared. But when they saw there was no escape they fought with great valour, and cut down the men of King Heidrek so fiercely that it seemed uncertain which would be defeated. When Heidrek saw his men fall thus in heaps, he rushed forth with the sword *Tyrfing* and killed one after the other; at last King Harald and his son and a great part of their men fell there, and Heidrek became the slayer of his father and brother-in-law. This was reckoned to be the second *nithings-deed* committed with Tyrfing according to the spell of the Dvergar. King Heidrek reddened the temple-altars with the blood of King Harald and Halfdan, and gave Odin all the dead men who had fallen there, in the place of his son Angantýr, in order to improve the season. When Queen Helga heard of the death of her father she was so affected that she hanged herself in the *disar-hall*[1] of the temple" (Hervarar Saga, c. 11 & 12).

[1] Disar = genii.

Several instances are mentioned in which powerful kings were sacrificed or offered their children on the altars of the gods.

"There was a great crowd of men who left Sweden because of King Ivar's rule. They heard that Olaf Tretelgja[1] had good lands in Vermaland, and so many went thither that the country could not support them. There then came a very bad season and a great famine. They attributed this to their king, as the Swedes are wont to hold him accountable for both good and bad seasons. King Olaf was not a zealous sacrificer, and this the Swedes did not like, thinking that therefore arose the bad years. They then gathered a host, went against the king, surrounded his house, and burned him, giving him to Odin as a sacrifice for good years. This was at Vœnir (Venern)" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 47).

The custom of sacrificing a beloved child of a chief was considered, as it well might be, the highest atonement that could be offered, and is one of such antiquity that its birth is lost in the dim light of past ages. We have remarkable instances of this custom mentioned in the Bible; the story of Abraham and Isaac, and of Jephthah's vow show the existence of the practice in very early times. In Lev. xx. 2-4, the practice is mentioned as taking place among the heathen; and we see that, as in the North, the father had absolute power over the life of his child, otherwise he could not sacrifice him.

The most thrilling accounts of sacrifice of children are those of the sacrifice by Hakon Jarl of his own son, and by King Aun of nine sons.[2]

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[1] Olaf, son of Ingjald Illrádi . . . fled to a forest district of Vermaland, where he cleared the land of its woods; therefore he was called Tretelgja (tree-cutter).

[2] "The scene of most interest, and at the same time of most horrors, taken from the mythical or poetical history of Greece is one which represents the sacrifice of Trojan captives to the *manes* of Patroclus. Achilles himself is the priest or butcher, for he occupies the centre of the scene, clad in brazen cuirass and greaves, his long yellow locks uncovered by a helmet, and seizing by the hair the wretched Trojan captive who is seated naked at his feet imploring mercy, he thrusts his sword into his neck, just as the 'swift-footed son of Peleus' is represented to have treated Lycaon, the first victim he sacrificed to his friend Patroclus. Above the Trojan stands Charon, in red jacket and blue chiton, wearing a cap or helmet, and bearing his mallet on his shoulder ready to strike. The right half of the scene is occupied by the two Ajaces, each bringing forward a victim, naked and wounded, whose hands are bound behind their backs. Ajax Telamonius, the more prominent of the two, is fully armed; and Ajax Oïleus is similarly armed, but without a helmet. The funeral pyre on which the corpse of Patroclus was already laid before the sacrifices of captives, horses, and dogs were made to his manes is not shown. This episode forms the subject of the first wall paintings found in Etruria

In the beginning of the battle of the Jomsvikings against Hakon Jarl and his sons luck was against him, and the Jarl called his sons ashore, where he and they met and took counsel.

"Hakon Jarl said: 'I think I see that the battle begins to turn against us; and I dislike to fight against these men; for I believe that none are their equals, and I see that it will fare ill, unless we hit upon some plan; you must stay here with the host, for it is imprudent for all the chiefs to leave it, if the Jomsvikings attack, as we may at any moment expect. I will go ashore with some men and see what can be done.' The Jarl went ashore north to the island. He entered a glade in the forest, sank down on both his knees and prayed; he looked northwards and spoke what he thought was most to the purpose; and in his prayers he called upon his fully trusted Thorgerd Hórdatróll; but she turned a deaf ear to his prayer, and he thought that she must have become angry with him. He offered to sacrifice several things, but she would not accept them, and it seemed to him the case was hopeless. At last he offered human sacrifices, but she would not accept them. The Jarl considered his case most hopeless if he could not please her; he began to increase the offer, and at last included all his men except himself and his sons Eirik and Svein. He had a son Erling, who was seven winters old, and a very promising youth. Thorgerd accepted his offer, and chose Erling, his son. When the Jarl found that his prayers and vows were heard, he thought matters were better, and thereupon gave the boy to Skopti Kark, his thrall, who put him to death in Hakon's usual way as taught by him"[1] (Fornmanna Sögur, xi. 134).

Human sacrifices were resorted to by kings in order to lengthen their own life.

"When King Aun was sixty he made a great sacrifice in order to secure long life; he sacrificed his son to Odin. King Aun got answer from Odin that he should live another sixty winters. Thereupon he was king for twenty-five winters at Uppsalir. Then Ali the Bold, son of King Fridleif (in Den-

which were illustrative of Hellenic myths, but since their discovery that of the Grotta del Orco at Corneto has afforded us additional proof that the Etruscans did not always confine the pictorial adornments of their sepulchres to the illustration of the peculiar customs, funeral observances, or religious creed of their native land" (Dennis's 'Etruria').

[1] From this passage we see that it was the custom of Hakon Jarl to make sacrifices, but unfortunately the manner in which he made them is not told.

mark), came with his host to Sweden against King Aun; they fought, and Áli always gained the victory. King Aun left his realm a second time and went to the western Gautland. Áli was king at Uppsalir for twenty-five winters, till Starkad the Old slew him. After his death Aun came back to Uppsalir and ruled the realm for twenty-five winters. He again made a great sacrifice for long life and offered up another son. Odin told him that he should live for ever if he gave him a son every tenth year, and would call a *herad*[1] (district) in the land after the number of every son whom he thus sacrificed. During ten winters after he had sacrificed seven of his sons he was unable to walk, and was carried on a stool. He sacrificed his eighth son and lived ten winters more in bed. He sacrificed his ninth son and lived ten winters more, and drank from a horn like a young child. He had one son left and wanted to sacrifice him, and thereupon to give Uppsalir with the *herads* belonging to it to Odin, and call it Tiundaland.[2] The Swedes stopped him; then he died and was mound-laid at Uppsalir" (Ynglinga, c. 29).

Men, particularly the slain after a battle, were sometimes given to Odin for victory, the largest number ever given being those who fell at the famous battle of Bravalla. It seems to have been customary to redden the altars with the blood of the fallen chiefs.[3]

Prisoners of war, no matter what their rank, were called thralls, and were sacrificed; sometimes they were slaughtered like animals, their blood put into bowls, and their bodies thrown into bogs or a spring outside the door of the temple called *blót-kelda* (sacrificing spring), or their backs broken on sharp stones; sometimes they were thrown from high cliffs.[4]

"Thorgrim Godi was a great sacrificer; he had a large temple raised in his grass-plot,[5] one hundred feet in length and sixty in breadth, and every man was to pay temple-tax to it. Thor was most worshipped there; the inmost part of it was made round as if it were a dome; it was all covered with hangings, and had windows; Thor stood in the middle, and other gods on both sides. There was an altar in front made with great skill and covered above with iron; on it there was to be a fire which should never die out, which they called holy

[1] See p. 478.
[2] Tiundaland = land of the tenth.
[3] Hervarar Saga, 9, 10, 11, 12.
[4] Kristnisaga, Fornmanna Sögur ii., 228.
[5] I.e. Tun or open space.

fire. On the altar was to lie a large ring of silver, which the temple priest was to wear on his arm at all meetings. Upon it all oaths were to be taken in cases of circumstantial evidence. On the altar was to stand a large bowl of copper, in which was to be put the blood which came from the cattle or men given to Thor; these they called *hlaut* (sacrifice-blood), and *hlaut-bolli* (sacrifice-bowl). The *hlaut* was to be sprinkled on men and cattle, and the cattle were to be used for the people (to eat) when the sacrificing feasts were held. The men whom they sacrificed were to be thrown down into the spring which was outside near the doors, which they called *blót-kelda*. The cross-beams which had been in the temple were in the hall at Hof, when Olaf Jónsson had it built; he had them all split asunder, and yet they were still very thick" (Kjalnesinga, c. 2).

"On Thorsness, where Thórólf Mostrarskegg landed, there was a very holy place (helgi-stad); and there still stands Thor's stone, on which they broke[1] those men whom they sacrificed, and near by is that *dom-ring* where they were sentenced to be sacrificed" (Landnama ii., c. 12).

This passage shows that the dom-ring where men were sacrificed was different from the dom-ring where the people met to judge; the former seems to have been always made with stones, while the latter, as we have seen from Egil's Saga, were made with hazel poles. It is probable that many of the *dom-rings* which are now seen were used as sacrificing places.

Not far from the large ship-form grave of Blomsholm, in a silent pine forest, stands a magnificent *Dom-ring* (see next page), a witness of the great past. What unwritten records are stamped upon its stones! what unrevealed histories lie for ever buried from our sight! how much they would tell if they could speak! The ring is about 100 feet in diameter, and is composed of ten standing stones. Near by is the eleventh. In the centre is a huge boulder, overlooking the rest; its uncovered part stands about 5 feet above the ground; it is 9 feet long by 7 feet wide.

"When Thórd gellir established the fjordungathing (quarter Things) he let the Thing of the Vestfirdingar be there (on Thorsness); thither men from all the Vestfjords were to come. There may still be seen the *dom-ring* within which

[1] Meaning, broke the backs of.

men were doomed to be sacrificed. Within the ring stands Thor's stone, on which those were broken who were used for

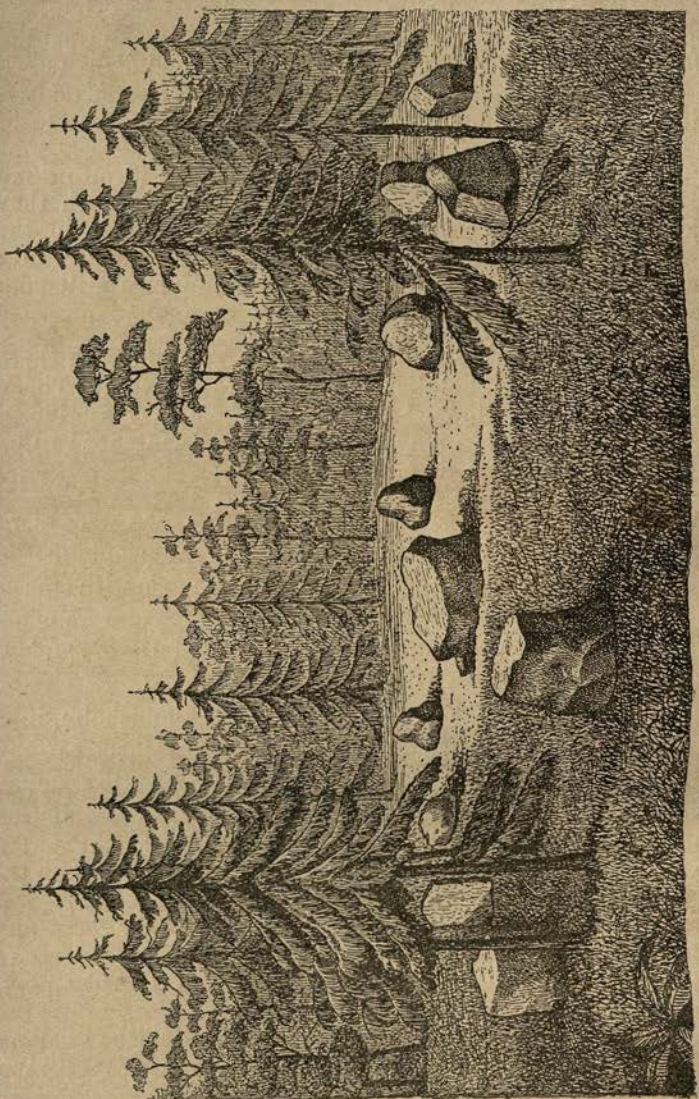

Fig. 778.—Dom-ring, or sacrificing ring, Blomsholm, Bohuslän.

sacrifice, and the blood-stains can still be seen on the stone" (Eyrbyggja, c. 10).

Many dom-rings[1] are seen in the country without the sacrificing stone in the centre; these may have been used as enclosures for duelling, while others similar to the above engraving may have been horg or sacred altars.

Sacrificing mounds, and apparently mounds in which offerings were deposited, are mentioned, but unfortunately we have no description of them.

"King Olaf[2] had there (Karlsá) broken the sacrificial mound of the heathens; it was so called because usually, when they had great sacrifices for a good season, or for peace, all were to go to this mound, and there sacrifice prescribed animals; they carried thither much property, and put it into the mound before they went away. King Olaf got very much property there" (Fornmanna Sögur v. 164.)

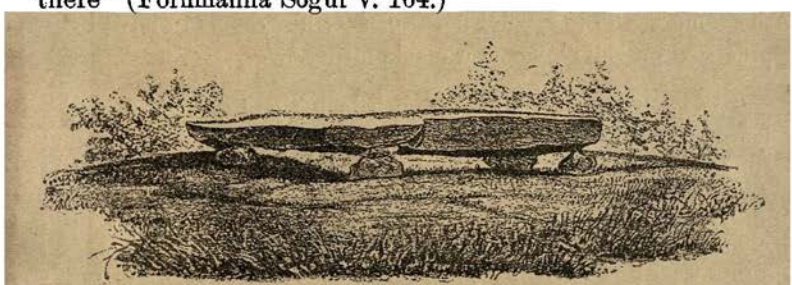

Fig. 779.—Probably a sacrificing slab, on a rocky ridge at Viala, Vingåkers parish, Södermanland, overlooking Lake Kolsnaren; 7 feet 10 inches in length, 5 feet 10 inches in width, and 10 inches thick.

"A mound composed of earth and pure pfennings; for thither must be carried a handful of silver and a handful of mould for every one who dies, and also for every one who is born. Odd said: 'Then kinsman Gudmund you shall go ashore with your men to the mound this night, according to this man's direction; and I will take care of the ships with my men.' They did this, and went to the mound, where they collected as much money as they could carry, and with their burden returned to the ships. Odd was well satisfied with the results, and delivered the man into their keeping. 'Keep good watch over him,' he said, 'for his eyes are all the time turned towards the shore, so that he could not have found it as disagreeable there as he says.' Odd with his men then

[1] Not far from nearly every one of the (twenty) dom-rings of Nerike there is a spring tending to confirm the Icelandic tradition of their use.

[2] King Olaf was on an expedition into France.

went ashore, and up to the mound. Gudmund and Sigurd, meanwhile watching the ships, put the man between them, and began to sift away the mould from the silver; but when they least expected it he jumped up and overboard, and swam towards the land. Gudmund snatched a harpoon and shot after him; it pierced the calf of his leg, but he reached the shore and disappeared in the forest. When Odd with his companions arrived at the mound, they each decided to take burdens according to their strength, but on no account heavier than could be easily carried"[1] (Örvar Odd's Saga, c. 9 & 10).

Among the human sacrifices were those called *blódörn* (blood eagle), so called on account of the skin or flesh being cut down the whole back to the ribs, from both sides of the spine, in the shape of an eagle, and of the lungs being drawn through the wound. This special mode of sacrifice seems to have been practised on the slayer of a man's father.[2]

"After King Harald Fairhair's sons had grown up they became very unruly, and fought within the country. The sons of Snœfrid, Halfdan Háleg (high leg) and Gudröd Ljómi, slew Rögnvalld Mœra Jarl. This made Harald very angry, and Halfdan fled westward over the sea, but Gudröd got reconciled to his father. Halfdan went to the Orkneys, and Einar Jarl fled from the isles to Scotland, while Halfdan made himself king of the Orkneys. Einar Jarl returned the same year, and when they met a great battle took place, in which Einar was victorious, and Halfdan jumped overboard. The following morning they found Halfdan on Rinar's hill. The Jarl had a blood eagle (blodörn) cut on his back with a sword, and gave him to Odin for victory. After that he had a mound thrown up over Halfdan. When the news of this reached Norway his brothers were very angry, and threatened to go to the islands and avenge him; but this Harald prevented. Somewhat later Harald went westward across the sea to the isles; Einar went away from the islands, and over to Caithness (Katanes). After this men intervened and they became reconciled. Harald laid a tribute on the islands, and ordered them to pay sixty marks of gold. Einar Jarl offered to pay the tribute, and in return possess all the *odals* (allodial rights). This the bœndr agreed to, for the rich thought

[1] Odd evidently, like some other of his countrymen, as seen in this narrative, was not orthodox in the religion of his fathers, for he robbed the graves.

[2] Cf. also Ragnar Lodbrók, 18; Norna Gest. 6; Olaf Tryggvason, 179; Sigurdar Kvida Fafnisbana ii., 26; Orkneyinga Saga, ch. 8.

they would buy them back, and the poor had not property enough to pay the tribute. Einar paid it, and for long after the jarls possessed all the odals, until Sigurd Jarl gave them up to the men of the Orkneys. Einar Jarl ruled long over the Orkneys, and died on a sick bed" (Flateyjarbók, p. 224, vol. i.).

The custom of a man giving himself to Odin on a sick bed by marking himself or being marked with the point of a spear, probably arose from the disgrace which was supposed to attach to a man who died unwounded in his bed, and not in battle. Odin himself[1] followed this practice, which enabled a man to come to Valhalla. When tired of life, or of old age, men gave themselves to Odin by throwing themselves from the rocks.

Eirik the victorious, who fought against Styrbjörn, gave himself to Odin in order to get the victory; and Harald Hilditönn was killed by Odin himself, because he had become so old.

The earliest account given of a human sacrifice in the North is that of Domaldi, which, if we may trust the genealogies, took place about the beginning of the Christian era.

"Domaldi inherited and ruled the land after his father Visbur. In his days there was in Sweden great hunger and famine; then the Swedes made large sacrifices at Uppsalir. The first autumn they sacrificed oxen, but the season did not improve; the second autumn they sacrificed men, but the season was the same or worse; the third autumn the Swedes came in crowds to Uppsalir when the sacrifice was to take place. The chiefs held their consultations, and agreed that the hard years were owing to their king, and that they must sacrifice him for good years, and should attack and slay him, and redden the altars with his blood. And thus they did" (Ynglinga Saga, ch. 18).

"Before the holding of the Althing (in the year 1000) in Iceland the heathens held a meeting, and resolved to sacrifice two men from every district of the land (Iceland was divided into four quarters), and to invoke their gods that they should not let Christianity spread over the country. Hjalti and Gizur had another meeting with the Christians, and said they would have human sacrifices as many as the

[1] Ynglinga Saga, 10.

heathens, adding: 'They sacrifice the worst men and cast them down from rocks and cliffs, but we will choose them for their virtues, and call it a victory-gift to our Lord Jesus Christ; we shall live the better, and more warily against sin than before. Gizur and I will give ourselves as a victory-gift on the behalf of our district'" (Biskupa Sögur i.).

From the following passage it will be seen that when Christianity gained a footing in Iceland, human sacrifices were abandoned:—

"Thorólf Heljarskegg (Hel-beard) settled in Forsœludal (Iceland); he was a very overbearing man and unpopular, and caused many a quarrel and uproar in the district. He made himself a stronghold (virki) south at Fridmundará, a short way from Vatnsdalsá, in a ravine; a ness was between the ravine and the river, and a large rock in front of it. He was suspected of sacrificing men, and there was not one in the whole valley that was more hated than he" (Vatnsdœla, ch. 16).

Hallstein, an Icelandic chief, son of the Norwegian chief, Thorólf Mostrarskegg,

"Dwelt at Hallsteinsnes. There Hallstein sacrificed his son, in order that Thor might send him high-seat-pillars (126 feet); thereafter a tree came on his land, sixty-three ells in length and two fathoms (6 ells = 12 feet) thick; this was used for his high-seat-pillars, and of it are made the high-seat-pillars of nearly every farm in the Thverfjords" (Landnama ii., c. 23).[1]

[1] Gisla Sursson mentions the same.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RELIGION.—IDOLS AND WORSHIP OF MEN AND ANIMALS, ETC.

The introduction of idol worship—The gods magnificently dressed—Besmearing the gods—Descriptions of the gods in temples—Amulets representing the gods—Worship of men after death—Animal worship—Worship of groves and natural objects—Fire regarded as holy.

It is impossible to tell at what time idols or representations of the gods came to be introduced; it is however certain from the Sagas, that they were already very common in the temple before Christian missionaries came to preach a new religion. At some period, and we know not how the change took place, we see that likenesses were made to represent some of the gods, which were often adorned with fine clothes and ornaments of silver and gold, and as a rule stood on an elevation or pedestal, which also seems to have served as an altar.[1] Occasionally they were besmeared with fat, possibly to give them a bright appearance.

There must have been many idols representing different persons who were worshipped besides the Asar, as we find that Thorgerd Hördabrud was also represented.

In the great temple in Mœri, in Norway, all the gods were seated on chairs, and the idol of Thor was magnificently adorned with precious metal. This god was also in the temple belonging to Hakon and Gudbrand in Gudbrandsdal.

"Then they (Fridthjof and Björn) heard that Beli's sons were in Baldr's hagi at the *disablót;*[2] they went up there, and asked Hallvard and Asmund to damage all ships small and large which were near; and so they did. They went to the door in Baldr's hagi; Fridthjof wanted to go in; Björn told him to be wary, but he wanted to go alone. Fridthjof asked

[1] Olaf Tryggvason, Hkr., c. 76; Halfredar Saga, 6; Vatnsdæla, c. 10, 16.

[2] See p. 411, sacrifice to the Disir.

him to stay outside and keep watch. Then Fridthjof went in, and saw that few people were in the *disar-hall.* The kings were at the *disablót* and sat drinking; there was fire on the floor, and their wives sat at the fireside and warmed the gods, and some besmeared them with grease and wiped them with a cloth" (Fridthjof's Saga, 9).

When Sigmund was ready to start for an expedition to avenge his father—

"The Jarl (Hakon) went out with him and asked, 'What belief hast thou?' Sigmund answered, 'I believe in my might and strength.' The Jarl replied, 'It must not be so; thou must seek for help where I put all my trust, which is in Thorgerd Hördabrud. Let us go to her, and try to get luck for thee from her.' Sigmund told him to do as he liked; they went to the woods, and then, by a little by-path, to an open space in the forest where there was a house with a fence around it; this house was very fine, and the carvings were ornamented with gold and silver. Hakon and Sigmund entered with a few men; there were many gods, and so many glass-windows, that there was no shadow anywhere. A splendidly dressed woman was in the inner part of the house opposite the entrance. The Jarl threw himself down, and lay long before her feet; then he rose and told Sigmund that they must make her some sacrifice, and put silver on the stool before her. 'But as a mark that she will accept, I want her to let loose the ring she wears on her arm; thou, Sigmund, wilt get luck from that ring.' The Jarl took hold of the ring, but it seemed to Sigmund that she clenched her fist and he did not get it. He threw himself down a second time before her, and Sigmund saw that he wept; he rose, and took hold of the ring, which then was loose, and gave it to Sigmund, who promised not to part with the ring" (Færeyinga Saga, ch. 23).

When Hakon Jarl, after having been baptized in Denmark, had again adopted the practice of the pagan religion,

"He heard of a temple which was the largest in Gautland, while it was heathen. In that temple were one hundred gods. Hakon took all the property which was in it. The men who guarded the temple and the sacrificing-place fled, while some of them were slain; Hakon went back to his ships with the property and burnt and destroyed all that he met with on the way, and had very much property when he came down. While

he was making this ravage in Gautland, Ottar Jarl, who ruled over a great part of Gautland, heard of it; he quickly started and gathered all the land host against Hakon Jarl, and attacked him. They at once began the battle; Hakon was overpowered, and at last fled with his men, and went to Norway. Thereafter Ottar Jarl summoned a *Thing*, and declared at it that Hakon should be called *varg-i-veum* (wolf in the holy place), because, said he, no man had done worse deeds, for he had destroyed the highest temple in Gautland, and wrought many other evil deeds; that no one knew any example of such things, and that wherever he went he should have that name" (Jómsvikinga Saga, ch. 12).

"King Olaf Tryggvason (995-1000) went to Thrandheim to christianize the bœndr; they agreed that he should go into their temple and observe their customs. He went into the temple, with a few of his men and some of the bœndr. They were all unarmed except the king, who had a staff ornamented with gold in his hand. As they entered there was no lack of carved idols; Thor sat in the middle, for he was most worshipped; he was large and ornamented all over with gold and silver; he sat in a splendid chariot, to which were harnessed two very well-made wooden he-goats. Both the chariot and the he-goats rested on wheels, and the rope around their horns was of twisted silver. All was made with wonderful skill" (Flateyjarbók i., p. 319).

Votive offerings of jewels and other valuable objects have been made in temples and churches in all lands and ages, and to this day the practice holds in some Roman and Greek Catholic countries.

The use of small images as amulets by the Northmen is shown by Kálf's answer when asked by the King (Olaf Tryggvason) where Halfred was.

"'He probably still adheres to his custom of sacrificing secretly; he has the image of Thor made of a tooth in his purse, and too little is told to thee, lord, about him, and thou canst not see how he really is.' The King asked them to call Halfred that he might answer for himself. Halfred came. The King said, 'Is it true of thee, that thou sacrificest?' 'It is not true, lord,' answered Halfred; 'now search my purse; here no trick is possible, even if I had wanted to use one.' Nothing of the kind was found with him" (Olaf Tryggvason's Saga).

"When King Olaf (Tryggvason) had been a short while in Thrandheim he heard a rumour that some men in Thrandheim still kept up heathendom, and that the idol of Frey stood there unbroken, and that those men who were there sacrificed to the idol. When he heard this he was displeased, and at the time he got these evil tidings he was at a feast. There were also some men from Thrandheim with him. He accused them of sacrificing to Frey as some witnesses had told him, and as they knew that they were not guiltless they did not deny it boldly, but would not acknowledge it. He said: 'It will be seen how much of your words is true, and I will try it in this way—I command you to break the idol of Frey, to which I am told you sacrifice, and if you will not do that I believe that the accusation I bring against you is true.' They answered: 'We will not break the idol of Frey, for we have served him long, and it has helped us well.' He said: 'I and my men will break it though you forbid it.' They answered: 'Certainly we will forbid and hinder the destruction of Frey, though we expect that he will valiantly defend himself and help us if we follow him boldly, for he has more power than thou thinkest.' He said: 'This shall be tried. You shall defend Frey and I will attack him with God's grace and the help of good men. Let him then defend himself if he is able. To-morrow we shall hold a *Thing* where I appoint. I will take Frey there and judge him boldly, and slay him, and do the good for you which God teaches me, if you will leave your false belief.' They did not think this very advisable, but saw it had to be as the king wished. They went to their ships and rowed in the fjord and strove with both sails and oars. The luck of the king was stronger than the witchcraft of Frey and the evil belief of those who followed him, and therefore it happened as the best one (God) wished, and the king's ship went much faster and he got first to the temple. When he came ashore his men saw some stud horses near the road which they said belonged to Frey. The king mounted a stallion and let others take the geldings, and they rode to the temple. He alighted from the stallion, went into the temple, and struck down the gods from their altars. Then he took Frey under his arm and carried him out to the horse, and shut up the temple. He rode with Frey to the meeting and came before those summoned. His land-tent was pitched, and he waited there. Now the men of Thrandheim came to the temple and opened it and went in. They saw that Frey had disappeared and the other gods were maimed, and they knew for certain that the king had caused this. They went to the meeting. When they had come there the king spoke

mostly of things connected with the rule of the land and the laws. He then sent men to his tent and bad them carry Frey out, and when he was brought to the king the king took him and set him up and said: 'Do you know this man?' They answered: 'We know him.' 'Who is he then?' said the king. 'One whom thou dost not know; he is Frey, our god.' He said: 'What good can Frey do, that you think it needful or a great necessity to believe in him?' They answered: 'We thought him very powerful until within a few years.' 'Why is he less powerful now?' said the king. They answered: 'Because he is now angry with us, which thou causest, for since thou didst tell us to believe in another god, and we partly followed thy persuasions, he thinks we have forsaken him, and therefore will not take any care of us.' He then said, as if in mockery or jest: 'It is unfortunate that Frey is angry with you, but in what way did he before show the power which you now miss?' They answered: 'He often spoke with us and foretold future things, and gave us good years and peace.' He said: 'I maintain that Frey has not spoken with you, but the devil himself.' . . . He took a large axe and went to Frey, and said: 'Now I will try, Frey, if thou canst talk and answer me.' Frey was silent. 'If thou,' said the king, 'canst not or wilt not, then may the one who is in thee, and has long strengthened thee, answer.' . . . Frey was silent. The king said: 'Still I speak to thee, Frey; if thou canst give to men strength or power, then spare it not, and do what thou art able to do, and if thou sleepest, awake and defend thee, for now I will attack thee.' He raised his hand and cut off Frey's hand, but he did not move. Then he struck one blow after the other until he had cut asunder the whole idol. . . ." (Flateyjarbók, I. Olaf Tryggvason).

The gods were not the only beings worshipped, for we have some examples of men being worshipped after their death.

"Olaf Geirstada-alf had a dream, at which he was much surprised, and which he would not tell when asked. He then summoned a *Thing* from all his realm, which was held at Geirstadir. The king asked the people to finish their cases, and afterwards he would make known why he had summoned them, as many might think that there was little reason for it. 'I will tell my dream here,' said he. 'It seemed to me that a large black and fierce-looking bull entered the land from the east; it went about the whole realm. It seemed that so many men fell before its breath, that only half were left. Finally it killed

my hird.' He asked them to explain it, for he knew it must signify something. They answered that he himself could guess best what it meant. He added: 'There have long been peace and good seasons in this kingdom, but many more people than it could sustain. The bull of which I dreamt is probably a foreboding of a sickness which will begin in the eastern part of this land, and cause many deaths. My hird will be attacked last, and it is most probable that I shall follow, for I cannot, more than others, survive my destined death-day. Now this dream is explained, and it will prove to be true. I advise the multitude here assembled to throw up a large mound out on the cape, and make a fence across it higher up, so that no cattle can go thither. Into the mound let every man of prominence put half a mark of silver to be buried with him. Before the disease ceases, I shall be placed in the mound. I warn all not to behave like some who worship by sacrifice, after their death, those in whom they trusted while alive, for I think dead men can do nothing useful. It may also happen that those who are worshipped will be suddenly bewitched. I think the same evil spirits (*vættir*) sometimes do useful, sometimes harmful things. I fear much that a famine will come in the land after I have been *mounded*, and nevertheless we shall be worshipped and afterwards, bewitched in spite of ourselves.' It happened as King Olaf said, and according to his explanation of the dream. The disease came before it was expected, many died, and all men of any prominence were laid in the mound; for King Olaf immediately sent men to make an exceedingly large mound, and the people made the fence according to his advice. It also happened that the hird died last and was *mound laid*. At last Olaf died, and was quickly laid among his men with much property and the mound was closed. Then fewer people died. Bad seasons and famine followed. It was then resolved to offer sacrifice to King Olaf for good seasons, and they called him Geirstada-alf" (Flateyjarbók ii. c. 6).

"There was a king named Godmund in Jötunheim; his farm was called Grund, and the *herad* (district) in which it was situated Glæsisvellir. He was a powerful man and old, as well as all his men, and lived for so many generations that people believed Odains Akr (the land of the undying) to be in his realm. The place is so healthy that sickness and old age vanish from every man who comes there, and nobody can die there. It is said that after the death of Godmund, men worshipped him and called him their god. King Godmund had a son, Höfund, a seer and a wise man; he was made judge over all the adjoining lands; he never gave a wrong judgment;

nobody dared or needed to doubt his judgment" (Hervara Saga, c. 1).

"Thórólf Smjör (butter, because he said Iceland was so fertile that butter dripped from every blade of grass) was the son of Thorstein Skrofa, son of Grim, who was worshipped after his death on account of his popularity and called Kamban" (Landnama i., ch. 14).

Animal Worship.—The worship of animals and birds seems to have sometimes taken place.

Once some men went to Eystein and told him that a large host had come into his realm so hard to deal with that it had devastated all the land, and left no house standing.

"When Eystein heard these tidings he thought he knew who these vikings were. He sent an *arrow-message* all over his realm and summoned all who were willing to help him and could wield a shield. 'Let us take with us the cow Sibilja, our god, and let her run in front, and I believe that, as before, they will not be able to stand her bellowing. I urge you all to valiantly drive away this large and evil host.' This was done, and Sibilja let loose; Ivar saw her coming, and heard her fierce bellowing; he bade all the host make a great noise both with weapons and war-cries, lest they should hear the voice of the evil beast which went against them. Ivar told his hearers to carry him forward as far as they could, and when the cow came at them to throw him on her, and then either he or she should die; and to take a large tree and cut it into the form of a bow, and also bring him arrows; this strong bow was now brought, and the large arrows he had ordered, which were not manageable by any other. Ivar then urged every one to do his best. Their host went onward with great rushing and tumult, and Ivar was carried in front of their ranks. The bellowing of Sibilja sounded so loud that they heard it as well as if they had been silent and stood still; they were so startled that all, except the brothers, wanted to fight among themselves. When this wonder was going on, those who carried Ivar saw that he drew his bow as if it were a weak elm twig, and they thought he was going to draw his arrows beyond the point.[1] They heard his bowstring sound louder than they had ever heard before; they saw that his arrows flew as swiftly as if he had shot with the strongest cross-bow, and so

[1] I.e., draw the string so hard that the point of the arrow is inside the curve.

straight that one arrow went into each eye of Sibilja; and she stumbled and fell down on her head, and her bellowing was much more than before. When she came at them he bid them to throw him on her, and he was as light to them as a little child, for they were not very near to the cow when they threw him; he came down on the back of Sibilja, and became as heavy as if a rock fell on her, and every bone in her was broken and she was killed.

"Although the sons of Ragnar were valiant, they could not stand both an overwhelming force of men and witchcraft; nevertheless they made a stout resistance, and fought like warriors with great renown. Eirik and Agnar were in the front that day, and often went through the ranks of King Eystein, but Agnar fell" (Ragnar Lodbrok's Saga).

"King Olaf was at a feast in Ögvaldsnes. One evening there came to the farm an old man, very wise in talk, one-eyed, with a hood low down over his face; he could tell of every country. He began to talk with the king, who liked it very much and asked about many things, but he was able to answer any question, and the king did not go to bed for a long time that night. Then the king asked if he knew who Ögvald was, after whom the bœr and the ness (cape) were named. The guest said he had been a king and a great warrior, and had worshipped a cow more than anything else, and taken it with him wherever he went, as he thought it wholesome to drink its milk. Ögvald fought against a king called Varin, and fell in the battle; he was *mounded* there a short way from the bœr and the bauta-stones raised, which stand there still. In another place near to this bœr the cow was *mounded*" (Olaf Tryggvason's Saga, c. 71).

"Floki Vilgerdarson, a great Viking, made himself ready in Rogaland to search for Snow-land (Iceland). He made a large sacrifice to the three ravens, which were to show him the way. They sailed to the Faroes, and then put to sea with the three ravens, to which sacrifice had been made in Norway; when the first was let loose it flew in the direction of the stern; the second rose into the air, and came back to the ship; the third flew in front of the prow in the direction in which they found the land.

"They landed at the place called Vatnsfjord, in Breidifjord. The fjord was so full of fish that they neglected to gather hay on account of the fishing, and during the winter therefore all their cattle died. The spring was rather cold there, and Floki went up on a mountain on the north side of the fjord, and on the other side saw a fjord filled with ice. Therefore they called the land Iceland" (Landnama i., c. 2).

Natural objects, such as groves and the sacrificing stone,

were worshipped, and no one was allowed to look at Helgafell (a holy mountain) before he had washed himself in the morning, and no cattle were to be killed there.

"Eyvind, the son of Lodin, settled in the valley of Flatey (his land extending) as far as Gunnsteinar (Gunn-rocks), which he worshipped."

"Thorir Snepil took up the whole of Fnjóskadal to Odeila, and dwelt at Lund (grove); he worshipped the grove" (Landnama iii., ch. 17).

"Hörd's brother-in-law Indridi wished to slay the bondi Thorstein Gullknapr (gold-button), and waited for him on the way to his sacrificing house, whither he was wont to go. When Thorstein came, he entered the sacrificing house and fell on his face before the stone he worshipped, which stood there, and then he spoke to it. Indridi stood outside the house; he heard this sung in the stone:—

Thou hast hither
For the last time
With death-fated feet
Trodden the ground;
Before the sun shines,
The hard Indridi
Will justly reward thee
For thy evil doings.

"Thorstein went out and home; Indridi distinctly saw him going, and told him not to run so fast. He went in front of him, and at once struck him with the sword of Soti under the chin so that his head flew off" (Hörd's Saga, c. 37).

"On the ness stands a mountain, which he (Thórólf Mostrarskegg) held in such reverence that no one was allowed to look on it unwashed, and nothing was to be killed on it, neither men nor cattle. He called it Helgafell (holy mountain), and he believed he would go thither when he died, as well as all his kinsmen on the ness. On the point at which Thor had landed he made the place for all judgments, and there established a *herad-thing* (a *Thing* for the district). This place was so holy that he would not allow the field to be defiled in any manner" (Eyrbyggja, c. 4).

Fire seems to have been looked upon as holy; and it was sometimes the practice to ride round the land with fire, or to throw a burning arrow, so as to signify ownership.

"Jörund godi (temple-priest), son of Hrafn Heimski, settled west of Fljót, where it is now called Svertingsstadir; there he raised a large temple. A small piece of land lay unsettled east of Fljót, between Krossá (river) and Jöldustein; Jörund went

with fire around this, and made it the property of the temple" (Landnama v., c. 3).

"Onund the wise took up land in the valley east of Merkigil. When Eirik (from Goddalir) wanted to settle in the valley west of it, Onund threw sacrificing-rods to ascertain when Eirik would come and take up the land. Onund then forestalled him, and shot with a burning arrow across the river, and thus took possession of the land west of it and dwelt on it" (Landnama iii., c. 8).

The chief Blundketil was burnt in his house by his foes. When the chief Tungu-Odd heard of it he rode to the place with the son of the burnt chief.

"Odd rode to a house which was not quite burnt down. He stretched out his hand and pulled a rafter of birch-wood out of the house, and then rode against the sun (from west to east) round the houses with the burning brand and said: 'Here I settle on this land, for I do not see any homestead; may the witnesses present hear it.' He then whipped his horse and rode away" (Hœnsa Thori's Saga, c. 9).

CHAPTER XXIV.

RELIGION.—THE NORNIR AND VALKYRIAS.

The shaping of man's future at his birth—The three Nornir—Their dwelling-place—Their kin—Good and Evil Nornir—They water the ash Yggdrasil—The maids of Odin—They determine the issue of battle—Choose the warriors for Valhalla—Figurative names—They ride through the air—Their appearance—They help warriors in battle—Their sojourn among men—The first and second songs of Helgi.

It was believed by the Northmen that the future life of all men was shaped at their birth by genii called *Nornir*, who preordained the fates of men and all that happened in the world. The gods themselves seem to have been under their control.

There were three Nornir, called *Urd*, the past; *Verdandi*, the present; and *Skuld*, the future, they dwelt by Urd's well, situated at the foot of the ash Yggdrasil, whose roots they watered with their wisdom and the experience of the past;[1] they spun the threads of fate at the birth of every child, and measured the boundaries of his doings, and the days of his life.[2]

The names of these three Nornir were to those men of old the embodiment and philosophy of life. They could not have existed without their fathers before them, hence Urd was the symbol of the great past.

Verdandi, the present, symbolised the present life itself, consequently was closely connected with Urd.

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[1] Cf. also Sigrdrifumál, 17; Helgi Hundingsbani; Norna Gest; Flateyjarbók; Fornaldar Sögur, i. Later Edda; Orkneyinga; Egil's Saga; Hávamál; Atlakvida.

[2] Helgakvida Hundingsbana.

Skuld, the future, represented the growth, the shooting forward, and was an inseparable part of the triad.

"There stands a fine hall under the ash, near the well, and from that hall come three maidens, who are named Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld. These forecast the lives of men, and are called Nornir.

In Vafthrúdnismal, Odin asks Vafthrúdnir—

Much have I travelled,
Much have I tried,
Many powers have I known;
Who are the maidens
That soar over the sea;
The wise-minded ones travel.

In Voluspa, Heid the sybil, in her vision—

Thence come three maidens,[1]
Knowing many things,
Out of the hall
Which stands under the tree;
One was called Urd,
Another Verdandi,
The third Skuld;
They carved on wood tablets,
They chose lives,
They laid down laws
For the children of men,
They chose the fates of men.
They disturbed the peace of the golden age of the gods.
The Asar met,
Who raised on the Idavöll[2]
Altars and high temples;
They laid hearths,
They wrought wealth,
They shaped tongs,
And made tools.

They played chess on the grass-plot;
They were cheerful;
They did not lack
Anything of gold
Until three
Very mighty
Thurs maidens came
From Jötunheim.

"But there are other Nornir who come to every one that is born, to shape his life. Some are of the kindred of the gods, others of Alfar kin, and some of Dvergar kin" (Gylfaginning, c. 15).

Vafthrúdnir.

Three great rivers
Fall over the field
Of the maidens of *Mögthrasir.*
They are the only destinies
That are in the world,
Though they dwell with Jötnar.

In time the number of Nornir seems to have increased.

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[1] These three maidens came from Jötunheim, the home of the Jötnar; here they are no doubt meant to designate the three Nornir, who came and disturbed the peace of the golden age by establishing past, present, and future, *i.e.*, change, fluctuation, development, and growth.

[2] *Idavöll, ida, movement; voll, plain. This stanza tells of the golden age when the Asars were happy and lacked nothing.*

In Fafnismál, Sigurd asks the following question of Fafnir:—

Sigurd.

Tell me, Fafnir,
As thou art said to be wise
And know many things well,
Who are the maidens
That are helping in need
And deliver mothers of children?

Fafnir.

Very different born
I think the Nornir are;
They own not kin together,
Some are Asar-born,
Others are Alfar-born,
Others are daughters of Dvalin.[1]

(Fafnismál.)

Atli says to his wife Gudrún:—

The Nornir have just
Roused me
With forebodings of evil;
I want thee to read them.
Methought that thou,
Gudrún, Gjúki's daughter,
Didst thrust me through
With a poisoned sword.

Gudrún.

It forebodes fire
When one dreams of iron;
The anger of woman
Means pride and sorrow;
I shall have to burn thee[2]
Against sickness,
Heal thee and help thee,
Though I hate thee.

(Gudrúnarkvida, 11.)

"Gangleri said: 'If the Nornir rule the fates of men, they deal them out very unevenly, for some have a happy and rich life, while others have little property or praise—some a long life, some a short one.' Hár replied: 'Good Nornir, and of good kindred, forecast a happy life; but when men have evil fates, the evil Nornir cause it'" (Gylfaginning, c. 15).

The water with which the Nornir watered the ash Yggdrasil was considered holy.

"Further it is told that the Nornir who live at Urd's well take water out of it every day, and also the clay which lies round it, and pour it over the ash-tree that the branches may not dry up or grow rotten. This water is so holy that everything which comes into the well grows white like the film called *skjall* which lies next to the eggshell. The dew which falls thence on the earth is called honey-dew, and the bees feed on it. Two birds live in Urd's well, called swans, and from them has sprung the kin of birds with this name" (Gylfaginning, c. 16).

The Valkyrias were the maids of Odin, and were sent by him to determine the issue of battle, and choose those who were to

[1] Grimnismál, gives a somewhat similar account.

[2] Burn a spot on the skin as a cure.

fall and dwell with him in Valhalla. The belief in Valkyrias appears to have been of very great antiquity, and is one of the most striking, poetical, and grand features of the Asa faith. In no record of the religions that have come down to us do we find anything that would make us suppose that such belief ever existed in other parts of the world, and it was well adapted to the creed of a people among whom war and the conquest of other lands were leading features.

Heid in Voluspa gives the names of the Valkyrias and in her version we learn that

She saw Valkyrias
Come from far off,
Ready to ride
To Goth-thjód.[1]
Skuld held a shield,
Skögul was next,
Gunn, Hild, Göndul,
And Geirskögul;
Now are numbered
The maidens of Herjan,[2]
The Valkyrias ready
To ride over the ground.

So we see that originally the number of Valkyrias belonging to Odin was only six, afterwards their number increased. Sometimes they appear nine together, at others treble that number.

Others are mentioned in Grimnismal. Odin, speaking to Geirrod, says—

I want Hrist and Mist
To carry the horn to me;
Skeggjöld and Skögul,
Hild and Thrúd,
Hlökk and Herfjötur,
Göll and Geirahöd,
Randgrid and Rádgrid,
And Reginleif,
They carry ale to the Einherjar."[3]

"Hjörvard and Sigrlin had a large and handsome son. He was silent, and no name had been fastened to him.[4] He sat on a mound, and saw nine Valkyrjas riding, and one of them seemed the foremost—she sang:—

Late wilt thou, Helgi,
Rule over rings[5]
On the Rodulsvellir,[6]
If thou art ever silent."

"The daughter of King Eylimi was Svava; she was a Valkyrja and rode over air and sea; she gave this name to Helgi, and often afterwards sheltered him in battles" (Helga Kvida Hjörvardssonar).

The following among other poetical and figurative names

[1] Thjód nation, nation of the Goths.
[2] Odin.
[3] Warriors.
[4] See pp. 31, 32.
[5] Wealth.
[6] Sun plains.

are given to the Valkyrias:—The maidens of victory, the goddesses of the fight, the graspers of spears, the witches of the shield, the maidens of the slain, the exultant ones, the strong one, the entangling one, the silent one, the storm-raisers. They are mentioned as riding through the air, over the sea, and amid the lightning, helmet-clad, with bloody brynjas, and glittering spears; the spear which carried death and victory being the emblem of Odin. When their horses shake their manes, the froth which comes from their bitted mouths drops as dew into the valleys, and hail falls from their nostrils into the woods.

The slain were called *Val* (chosen), and belonged to Odin. From the word *Val* are derived the names of Valkyrias, Valfödr (the father of the slain), Valhalla (the hall of the slain), Valól (field of battle, field of the slain), and probably also of those birds of prey which after the battle visited the field of action.

Skuld, the youngest of the three Nornir, who personified the future, followed the Valkyrias, probably in order to witness the decrees of fate given to men at their birth.

"There are others that have to serve in Valhöll, carry drink and take care of the table-dressing and the beer cups. These are called Valkyrias; Odin sends them to every battle; they choose death for men and rule victory. Gunn and Róta and the youngest Norn, Skuld, always ride to choose the slain and rule *man-slayings*" (Gylfaginning, ch. 36).

It was believed that during a battle warriors sometimes saw Valkyrias coming to their help: how grand and beautiful must have been the vision created in their mind by their faith in them, as they thought they saw them riding on their fiery steeds, and sweeping over the battle-field, by land or by sea. It is hard to realise a grander picture for a warrior to behold.

Helgi saw:—

Three times nine maidens,
But one rode foremost
A white maiden under helmet;
Their horses trembled,
From their manes fell
Dew into the deep dales,
Hail on the lofty woods;
Thence come good seasons among men,
All that I saw was loathsome to me.
[Helga Kvida Hjörvardssonar.]

Sometimes the Valkyrias came to earth and remained among men.

"Nidud was a king in Sweden. He had two sons and one daughter, whose name was Bödvild. There were three brothers, sons of the Finna-king, one Slagfinn, the other Egil, and the third Völund; they ran on snow-shoes, and hunted wild beasts. They came to the Ulfdal, where there is a lake called Ulfsjár (Wolf's lake), and there made themselves a house. Early one morning they found at the shore of the lake three women who were spinning flax, near them lay their swan-skins; they were Valkyrias. Two of them were daughters of King Hlödver (Louis), Hladgunn Svanhvit (Svan-white), and Hervör Alvitr (All-wise); and the third Ölrún, daughter of Kjar of Valland. The brothers took them to their house. Egil got Ölrún; Slagfinn, Swan-white; and Völund, All-wise. There they dwelt for seven winters; after which the women went to visit battle-fields, and did not return. Then Egil went on snow-shoes to look for Ölrún, and Slagfinn for Svan-white, while Völund remained in Ulfdal. He was the most skilled smith that is spoken of in ancient Sagas. King Nidud had him captured, as is told in the song" (Völundar Kvida).

Helga Kvida gives an account of how Sigrun, a Valkyria, betrothed herself to Helgi, and of how she comes with other Valkyrias to protect him. Their appearance is thus described:—

Then gleams flashed
From Logafjöll,[1]
And from those gleams
Came lightning;
The high ones[2] rode helmet-clad
Down on the Himinvangar;
Their brynjas were
Blood-bespattered,
And from their spears
Sprang rays of light.

Early (in the day) asked
From the wolf-lair
The *döyling* (the king) about this
The southern disir[3]
If they would home
With *hildings*[4]
That night go;
There had been clang of bowstrings.

But from the horse
The daughter of Högni (Sigrun)
Hushed the clatter of shields;
She said to the king,
I think we have
Other work to do
Than drink beer
With the ring-breaker (Helgi)

[1] Fire-mountain. Here the text is corrupted, but I follow Bugge in the suggestion that this is a place-name, the battle taking place on the plain beneath the Logafjöll, from which the Valkyrias come down to take the slain.

[2] The Valkyrias.

[3] Valkyrias are here called disir, guardian spirits, and seem to come from the South, the ancient home of the Asar.

[4] Chiefs. Helgi invited them to come home with him and his chiefs that night, and they would not.

In the second song of this poem we learn the mode of thought, the religious ideas and customs of the people of the North, and glean some new facts; that men and women were sometimes thought to be born again; that Helgi derived his name from Helgi Hjörvardson, and that he was brought up by Hagal. His foes, and not the sons of Hunding, search for him, but he escapes by dressing himself in the garb of a bondwoman. This episode of his life and the following fights must have taken place after those of the first song. The connection between the two poems is somewhat obscure.

"Granmar was a powerful king who lived at Svarinshaug; he had many sons, among them Hödbrod, Gudmund, and Starkad. Hödbrod was at an appointed meeting [1] of kings; he betrothed himself to Sigrun,[2] daughter of Högni. When she heard this she rode with Valkyrias over the sea and air to search for Helgi. He was then at Logafjöll (Fire-mountains), and had fought against the sons of Hunding; there he slew Alf and Eyjolf, Hjorvard and Hervard; he was very weary of the fight, and sat down at Arastein (Eagle's stone); where Sigrun found him, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, and told him of her errand, as is related in the old Völsunga-kvida:—[3]

Sigrun sought
The glad king,[4]
She took Helgi's
Hand in hers;

She kissed and greeted
The king under his helmet;
Then did his mind
Turn to the maiden.

She said she loved
With all her mind
The son of Sigmund
Ere she had seen him.

I was to Hödbrod
In the host betrothed,
But another chief
I wanted to have.

Yet I fear, chief,
The anger of my kinsmen;
I have broken
The *mind-marriage* of my father.[5]

The maiden of Högni
Spoke not against her mind;
She said she would
Have the love of Helgi.

Helgi.

Do not care for
The wrath of Högni,
Nor for the ill-will
Of thy kin;
Thou wilt, young maiden,
Live with me;
Thou, good maiden, hast kinsmen
Whom I do not fear.

[1] We find that kings sometimes had meetings among themselves.

[2] Probably she was betrothed by her father, not being present herself.

[3] From this we see that this beautiful story is derived from the lost Völsunga-kvida (a great loss), and from which Völsunga itself is probably mostly taken.

[4] Glad because of victory.

[5] The marriage which her father had set his mind upon.

"Helgi then gathered a large fleet, and sailed to Frekastein (Wolf's stone). At sea they met with a dangerous tempest, and lightning flashed down on the ships. They saw nine Valkyrias riding in the air, and recognised Sigrun; then the storm abated, and they came safely to the land. The sons of Granmar sat on a rock when the ships sailed towards the shore.

"Gudmund rode home with news of war; then the sons of Granmar gathered a host. Many kings came there. There were Högni, the father of Sigrun, and his sons Bragi and Dag. There was a great battle, and the sons of Granmar fell, with all their chiefs, except Dag, son of Högni, whose life was spared, and who promised on oath to follow the Völsungs. Sigrun went among the slain, and found Hödbrod near death's door. She sang:—

Sigrun of Sevafjöll[1]
Will not,
King Hödbrod,
Fall into thy arms;
Gone is the life
Of Granmar's sons;
The grey steeds[2] of jötun-women
Many corpses tear.

She met Helgi, who answered:—

All is not given to thee,
Mighty wight;[3]
For I say the Nornir
Wield some power.
This morning fell
At Frekastein
Bragi and Högni;
I was their slayer.

"Helgi married Sigrun, and they had sons; but Helgi did not live long. Högni's son Dag sacrificed to Odin for revenge on his father, and Odin lent him his spear. Dag met his brother-in-law Helgi at Fjoturlund; he thrust the spear through him, Helgi fell, and Dag rode to Sevafjoll and told Sigrun the tidings:—

Loth am I, sister,
To tell thee the sorrow,
For unwilling have I
Made my sister weep;
This morning fell
At Fjoturlund
The Budlung[4] who was
The best in the world,
And stood on
The neck of hildings.[5]

Sigrun.

Thee shall all
Oaths harm[6]
Which thou to Helgi
Hast sworn

[1] Sigrun speaks to the dying Hödbrod on the battle-field.

[2] Wolves.

[3] Meaning: "Everything is not in thy power, as the Nornir have great power also over the fates of men." The death of Helgi was against Sigrun's will.

[4] King.

[5] A custom found in the Old Testament (Joshua), of putting the foot on the subdued king's neck.

[6] Dag broke his oath, as we have seen before; and Sigrun cursed him for having done so.

At the bright
Waters of Leiptr[1]
And at the rain-cold
Rock of the sea.
The ship shall not move
Which should carry thee,
Though a fair wind to thy wish
Blows on it.
The horse shall not run
Which is to run with thee,
Though thou hast to
Escape from thy foes.

The sword shall not bite
Which thou drawest,
Except when it sings
About thy own head;
Then were the death
Of Helgi avenged,
If thou wert an outlaw
Out in the forest,
Lacking property
And all enjoyment,
And hadst not food
Unless thou tearest corpses.

Dag.

Mad art thou, sister,
And out of thy wits
As thou invokest curses
On thy brother;
Odin alone
Causes all the ills,
For between kinsmen
Runes of strife he bore.

Thy brother offers thee
Red rings,[2]
All Vandilsve[3]
And Vigdalir;[4]
Take half of my lands
As indemnity for sorrow,
Thou ring-adorned maiden
And thy sons.

"Sigrun was short-lived from grief and sorrow. It was the belief in olden times that men were reborn, but now it is called an old woman's story. It is said that Helgi and Sigrun were born again; he was then named Helgi Haddingjaskati, and she Kara,[5] Hálfdán's daughter, 'as is sung in the lay of Kara,[6] and she was a Valkyria.'" [Helgi Hundingsbani II.]

[1] Leiptr = flash of lightning. Probably this was a swift river, or waterfall.

[2] Here we see the custom of wergild, so often described in the Sagas.

[3] The temple of Vandil.

[4] Valleys of fight.

[5] Cf. also Helga Kvida Hjörvardsonar.

[6] The song of Kara is lost. Svafa in the first song, Sigrun in the second, is Svafa reborn; and Kara in the third and lost song is Sigrun reborn.

CHAPTER XXV.

RELIGION.—THE VOLVAS.

Prophetic sibyls—Great reputation of some Volvas—Ceremonies attendant on their prophecies—Payment to the sibyls—Their descent—Incantations—Cats favourites of the sibyls.

THE utterances of the *Volvas* or sibyls,[1] who could tell the past and the future, were given to the people as coming from the gods; and by special preparations and conjurations they made men believe that they were placed in such a state that they could see into the decrees of fate, or, as they themselves expressed it, had been informed of things which were previously secret.

Some *Volvas* had a greater reputation than others, and in time of great calamity people sent for them, in order to know the decrees of impending fate. When the *Volva* came a seat of honour was assigned to her, a separate feast[2] prepared, and among the dishes one made of the various hearts of animals.

When the principal question was to be answered, special preparations were required. *Seid*[3] was to be performed. A *Seid-hjall,* or platform consisting of a flat stone, was laid upon three or four posts, and women were to be found who knew how to recite or sing the so-called Vardlokur.[4] When all this was ready, and the *Volva* on the platform, the women formed in a circle round it, and the effective song was chanted while

[1] In Orvar Odd we see that the Volvas performed the foretelling ceremony with fifteen boys and fifteen girls. It seems that night was the chosen time. The boys and girls doubtless stood in a ring round the platform, and sang incantations. They had a stick, with which they struck the cheek of a man, and brought oblivion on him, and then, by striking him on the other cheek, gave him back his memory.

[2] Eirik the red, 5.

[3] Boiling "seid," or the witches' broth, was the chief art in witchcraft.

[4] Only found in Thorfin Karlsefni.

the seeress, with the strangest gesticulations, made her conjurations and received her revelations.[1]

The two brothers Hálfdán and Fródi were kings (in Denmark). Fródi slew Hálfdán, but could not find his sons Helgi and Hróar, and therefore invited Sœvil jarl, who was married to their sister Signý, to a feast, as Fródi suspected that the boys were staying with him.

"A *Volva* called Heid was there; Fródi asked her to use her art, and try what she could tell of the boys. He entertained her splendidly, and seated her on a high *seid-platform*. The King asked what tidings she saw, 'for I know that many things will pass before thy eyes now, and I see great luck on thee; and answer me as quickly as thou canst, seid-woman.' She then threw open her jaws and yawned much, and a song came out of her mouth:

'Two are inside,
I trust neither of
The handsome ones
Who sit at the fires.'

"The King asked: 'Is it the boys, or those who saved them?' She answered:

'It is those who long
Were in Vifilsey
And were called there
With the names of dogs,
Hopp and Hó.'

"At this moment Signý threw a gold ring to her; she became glad at this gift, and now wished to change what she had told. She said: 'Why was this so? All that I told was a lie, and now all my telling is gone astray.' The King said: 'Thou shalt be tortured to tell it.' . . . . He shook the seid-woman hard, and asked her to tell the truth, if she did not want to be tortured; she yawned much, and the seid-telling was difficult. She sang:—

'I see where sit
The sons of Hálfdán,
Hróar and Helgi,
Both unhurt;
They will rob
The life of Fródi

unless they are killed soon, which will not take place;' thereupon she leapt down from the seid-platform, and sang:—

'Keen are the eyes
Of Ham and Hrani;[2]
The high-born are
Wonderfully bold.'

[1] Vatnsdæla, 3, 10; Thorfin Karlsefni, 3; Orvar Odd, ch. 2, 3.

[2] Helgi and Hróar had taken the names of Ham and Hrani.

"Thereafter the boys ran out to the wood with great fear; their foster-father Regin recognized them and was very glad. The *Volva* had given them the good advice to run away when she ran out of the hall herself. The king asked men to rise and search for them. Regin extinguished all the lights in the hall, and each man held the other back, for some wished them to escape, and in this way they got into the wood" (Hrolf Kraki's Saga, c. 3).

The *Volva* Gróa used spell-songs in order to get a whetstone out of Thor's head.

"The *Volva* Gróa, wife of Örvandil the skilled, came and sang her spell-songs over Thor until the whetstone got loose. When Thor felt this, and had hope of getting rid of the whetstone, he wanted to reward Gróa for the cure, and make her glad; he told her the tidings that he had waded southward across Elivagar, and carried Örvandil in a basket on his back away from Jötunheimar; the proof of this was that one of his toes had projected out of the basket and frozen so that Thor broke it off and threw it upon the heaven, and made of it the star called Örvandil's toe. Thor said he would soon come home. Gróa became so glad that she remembered no spell-songs, and the whetstone did not get loose, and still sticks in the head of Thor" (Skáldskaparmal, c. 17).

The descent of the Volvas is thus described:—

All Volvas come from	All sorcerers
Vidólf,	From Svarthöfdi,
All wizards from	All Jötnar
Vilmeid,	From Ymir.

The Sagas give an interesting insight into the incantations and ceremony used by the *Volvas*.

"Ingjald dwelt at Hefni, north in Halogaland. He went on warfare in the summer, remaining quiet during the winter. Friendship existed between Ingjald and Thorstein Ketilsson, and the former became the fosterer of Ingimund Thorsteinsson.

"Once at a feast, according to ancient custom, Ingjald prepared incantation (*seid*), that men might know their fates. There was there a Finn woman skilled in witchcraft. Ingimund and Grim (son of Ingjald) came to the feast with a great many men. The Finn woman was placed high, and splendid preparations made for her; each of the men went from his seat to inquire of her about their fates. She told every one

his fate, but they did not all like it quite as well. The two foster-brothers sat in their seats and did not go to inquire; they had no mind for her prophesying. The *Volva* said, 'Why do these young men not ask about their fates, for they seem to me the most noteworthy of those present?' Ingimund answered, 'I do not care to know my fate until it comes, and I think my life does not depend on thy tongue-roots.' She replied, 'I will, however, tell thee unasked. Thou wilt settle in a land called Iceland; it is still to a great extent unsettled; there thou wilt become a man of rank and grow old; many of thy kinsmen will also be famous men in that land.' Ingimund said, 'This is well told, because I have made up my mind never to go to that place, and I should be a poor trader if I sell my many good family lands and go into deserts.' The Finn answered: 'It will happen as I tell, and it shall be a token that the image has disappeared from thy purse which King Harald gave thee in Hafrsfjord, and it now lies on the stone ridge where thou wilt settle; a Frey of silver is marked on it; when thou buildest thy farm my tale will prove true.' Ingimund said: 'If I should not offend my foster-father by it, I would reward thee by knocking thee on the head; but because I am not an overbearing or fretful man, I shall not do it.' She said he need not be angry. Ingimund said she had brought bad luck there, and she said that it would be thus, whether he liked it or not. She added: 'The fate of Grim also points thither, as well as that of his brother Hrómund, and both will be great bœndr.' Next morning Ingimund searched for the image, but did not find it; he thought this a bad omen. Ingjald told him to be merry, and not let this affect him, or hinder his joy, saying that many famous men now thought it honourable to go to Iceland, and that it was only for good that he invited the Finn. Ingimund said he could not thank him for this, but nevertheless their friendship would never cease" (Vatnsdæla Saga, c. 10).

"At that time there was a very bad season in Greenland; the men who had gone a-fishing had a small catch, and some had not returned. There was a woman in that district (Herjolfsnes), Thorbjörg, who was a *spákona*, and was called 'the little *Volva*.' She had had nine sisters, all *spákonas*, but she alone was then living. It was her custom in the winter to go to feasts, and those especially who wanted to know about their fate, or the season, invited her. As Thorkel was the greatest bondi in Herjolfsnes, it was thought he ought to know when the bad season would cease. He invited the prophetess, and she was well received, as was customary with such women. A high seat was prepared for

her, and a cushion of hen's feathers placed upon it. That evening, when she came with the man sent for her, she was dressed in a blue cloak with straps, set with stones down to the skirts; she wore glass beads on her neck, and a hood of black lambskin lined with white catskin; she had a knobbed staff in her hand, ornamented with brass and with stones around the top; at her belt hung a large skin-bag, in which she kept the charms which she needed for her foretelling. She wore hairy calfskin shoes with long thongs with large tin buttons on the ends; she had on her hands white catskin gloves with the fur inside. When she entered every one thought it his duty to greet her with words of respect; she received this according to her liking of each of those present. Thorkel took her hand and led her to the seat prepared for her, and then begged of her to let her eyes run over the people of the household, and over the herd, and over the homestead. She spoke a little of everything. The tables were set in the evening; the food prepared for her was porridge made with goat's milk, and the hearts of all kinds of animals which were there. She had a spoon of brass and a knife of brass with a handle of walrus-tusk, mounted with two rings; its point was broken off. After the tables were taken away, Thorkel went to her and asked how she liked the looks of things there in the homestead and the behaviour of the men, and how soon she would ascertain what he had asked her, which all were most anxious to know. She said she could not tell until the next morning, after she had slept. Towards the end of the following day such preparations were made for her as she needed for performing the *seid*. She bade them get women who knew the witchcraft songs which were used for the *seid*, called *vard-lokkur* (weird or fate songs); but such women could not be found; search was made on the farm if any one knew them. Then Gudrid (the daughter of an Icelander by name Thorbjörn, who had emigrated to Greenland) said: 'I am neither skilled in witchcraft nor a prophetess, but nevertheless Halldis, my foster-mother, taught me a poem in Iceland, which she called *vard-lokkur*.'[1] 'Then thou art wise in good time,' replied Thorkel. She answered, 'This is the only custom at which I will not assist, for I am a Christian woman.' Thorbjörg added, 'It may be that thou wilt help people herewith and wouldst not be a lesser woman than before (and still wouldst not be lowered by it), and of Thorkel I will ask the things needed.' Thorkel pressed Gudrid hard, and she consented. The women

[1] This song is lost.

placed themselves in a ring around the *seid-hjall* on which Thorbjörg sat, and Gudrid sang the song so well that all present thought they had never heard a finer voice. The *spákona* thanked her, and said that many spirits who had before wanted to depart and give no help had now come, and found pleasure in listening, as the song was so well sung; 'and many things which before were hidden from me and others are now made clear. I can tell thee, Thorkel, that this bad season will not last longer than this winter, and that it will improve with the spring; the sickness which has been here will also be better sooner than you expect. I will at once reward thee Gudrid for thy help, for thy fate is now very clear to me; thou wilt be married very honourably here in Greenland, though thou wilt not enjoy it long, for thy ways lie to Iceland, where a great and good family will spring from thee, and such bright rays shine over thy offspring that I have not power to see this clearly; and now farewell, daughter.' Then they went to the *spákona*, and every man asked what he wished most to know. She spoke willingly, and what she did not fail much to prove true. Then she was called for to another farm, and went there. Thorbjörn was then sent, for he would not stay at home while such superstitions were performed. The weather soon improved, as Thorbjörg had told" (Saga Thorfin's Karlsefnis, c. 3).[1]

Cats seem to have been special favourites with these sorceresses.

"Thórolf Sleggja became a very unruly man; he was a thief, and in other respects a very wicked man. People very much disliked his neighbourhood, and thought they might expect any evil from him. Though he had not many men with him, he had animals which he trusted, namely, twenty cats; they were all black, and exceedingly large and strongly bewitched. People went to Thorstein (a chief) and told him this trouble, as the rule of the *herad* belonged to him; they said Thórolf had stolen from many, and done many other unmanly deeds. Thorstein said this was true, 'but it is not very easy to deal with this man of Hel and his cats, and I do not want to lose any of my men against them.' They answered he could scarcely keep his honour if he did nothing. Then Thorstein gathered men, as he wanted to have many with him. His brothers and his Norwegian guest were with him. They went to Sleggjustadir. Thórolf did not trouble himself about this; he could never have good men with him. He went in when

[1] Cf. also Norna Gest's Thatt. c. 3.

he saw them coming on horseback, and said: 'Now the guests must be welcomed, and I intend my cats to do it, and I will place all of them in the entrance, and it will take them long before they get in if they defend the door.' Then he made them very strong with spells, and they looked very fierce, mewing and rolling their eyes. Jökul (Thorstein's brother) said to Thorstein: 'It was good advice of thine not to let this human fiend be undisturbed any longer.' They were eighteen men. Thórolf said to himself: 'Now fire shall be made, and I do not care though smoke follows it, for the coming of the Vatnsdal men is not likely to be peaceful. He put a kettle over the fire, and laid under it wool and all kinds of rubbish, and the house became full of smoke. Thorstein came to the door and said: 'We ask thee to go out, Thórolf.' He answered that their errand could not be peaceful. Then the cats at once began to whine and act hideously. Thorstein said: 'This is a wicked company.' Jökul answered: 'Let us go in at them, and not care for these cats.' Thorstein said they should not, 'for it is most likely that our men will be hurt by all the cats and Thórolf's weapons, for he is a great champion; I should prefer that he gave himself up and walked out, for he has so much smoke from the fuel that he cannot well stay in.' Thórolf took the kettle off the fire and threw it on the wool-pile, and so strong a smell came out that Thorstein and his men could not stand very near the door. Thorstein said: 'Beware of the cats that they do not clutch you, and let us throw the fire into the houses.' Jökul took a large firebrand and threw it into the entrance, so that the cats drew back and the door fell back. The wind blew on the houses and the flames were fanned up. Thorstein said: 'Let us stand at the fence where the smoke is thickest and see what he does, for he has so much fuel that he cannot stay long.' Thorstein guessed right. Thórolf jumped out with two chests full of silver, and went with the smoke; when he came out the Norwegian was there, and said, 'Here is the fiend running, and he looks wicked now.' He ran after Thórolf down to Vatnsdal river, until they came to some deep pits or fens. There Thórolf turned round towards him, took hold of him, laid him under his arm, and said: 'Thou triest to run now; let us then both run.' He jumped into the bog and they sank, and neither came up again. Thorstein said: 'A great mishap was this that my Norwegian should perish, but it is well that Thórolf's property will be enough to pay his wergild.' And so it was. The abode of Thórolf was after this called Sleggjustadir, and cats were often seen there, and it was often thought evil to be there" (Vatnsdæla, c. 28).

Men and women with the power of foreseeing and foretelling

were thought to be born with the same gifts as the *Volva;*[1] by foretelling evil they had a great hold on the people, and received good rewards for their knowledge.[2]

"A woman, by name Oddbjörg, went about the *herad.* She was merry, wise and foreknowing. She made it a great point that the housewives should receive her well, and she told favourable things according to her entertainment. She came to Upsalir. Saldis received her well, and asked her to foretell something good about her boys. She said: 'These boys look promising if they have luck, which I do not see.' Saldis said: 'I think thou wilt not find the entertainment very good for this taunt.' She answered: 'Thy entertainment will not depend on this, and thou needest not be so sensitive as to words.' Saldis said: 'Little shalt thou say of it if thy mind does not think it good.' She answered: 'I have not as yet said too much, but I do not think their love to each other will last long.' Saldis replied, 'I thought I deserved other words for the sake of good entertainment, and thou wilt be driven away if thou tellest evil foretellings.' Oddbjörg said: 'I think I need not spare thee as thou sayest this without reason; I will not visit thee again, and thou mayest bear this as well as thou wilt, but I can tell thee that they will carry spears of death against each other, and one thing after another, worse and worse, will be caused by this in the *herad*'" (Viga Glum, c. 12).

"When Hákon, Pal's son, was in Sweden, he heard of a man who practised sorcery and foretelling, whether he used for it witchcraft or other things. He became very curious to see this man, and know what he could tell about his fate. He went to *him,* and at last found him in a district near the sea where he received *feasts and foretold seasons* and other things to the bondi. When he met him he asked how he would succeed in getting the realm or other luck. The wizard asked who he was, and he told his name and kin, that he was a son of the daughter of Hákon, Ivar's son. The wizard said: 'Why shouldst thou ask witchcraft or foretelling from me? Thou knowest that thy kinsmen little liked men of my kind. It may be needful for thee to ask thy kinsman, Olaf the Stout, in whom thou trustest fully, about thy fate, but I guess that he will not condescend to tell thee what thou art anxious to know, or is not so powerful as thou thinkest him.' Hákon answered: 'I will not blame him, for I think it is rather my unworthiness to learn wisdom from him than his in-

[1] Laxdæla, 33; Njala, 127.

[2] Orkneyinga, 100, 102; Ljosvetninga, 21; Vatnsdæla, 12; Orvar Odd, 2.

capability to teach it to me. I have come to thee because I think that neither of us need envy the other as to virtue or religion.' The man answered: 'I am pleased that thou trustest fully in me, and more than in the belief of thyself and thy kinsmen. It is strange with those who have this belief, they fast and have vigils, and think thus to be able to know the things they desire, and though they do such things they know less of the things they wish to know the more important they are. We undergo no afflictions, and yet always know the things our friends think important. Now it will be so that I will keep thee, because I see thou thinkest thou canst rather get truth from me than from the preachers of King Ingi whom he trusts fully. Thou shalt come after three nights, and then we shall see whether I am able to tell thee any of the things thou wishest to know.' They parted, and Hákon passed three nights in the district, and then went to the wizard. He was alone in a house and sighed heavily when Hákon entered, stroked his forehead with his hand, and said it had taken him much trouble to know the things he wished to hear of; Hákon said he wanted to hear his fate. The wizard began: 'If thou wishest to know thy fate it is long to tell, for it is great, and many great tidings will spring from thy life and doings—I see in my mind that thou wilt at last become sole chief over the Orkneys, but it may be thou thinkest the waiting time long. I also think that thy offspring will rule there, and thy next journey westward to the Orkneys will lead to great events when that which springs from it appears. Thou wilt also in thy days commit a crime which thou mayest redress or not to the god in whom thou believest. Thy steps go further out into the world than I can trace, though I think thou wilt rest thy bones in its northern half. Now I have told thee what I can tell thee this time, and thou mayest be satisfied or not with it.' Hákon answered: 'Much tellest thou if it is true, but I think it will turn out better than thou sayest, and maybe thou hast not seen the truth.' The wizard said he might believe what he liked, but that this would take place" (Orkneyinga, c. xxvi. p. 100).

The crime was the slaying of St. Magnus; and the steps out in the world, Rögnvald's journey to the Holy Land.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RELIGION.—ÆGIR AND RAN.[1]

Ægir the god of the sea—His wife Ran—The origin of wind and fire—Figurative names of the sea, the wind, ice, rocks, clouds, hail, and rain—Ran's net—The nine daughters of Ægir and Ran—Superstitions connected with Ran.

ÆGIR seems to have been one of the earlier gods worshipped in the North as the god of the sea. His worship must have been deeply implanted in the hearts of the people, and he was worshipped to the end of the pagan era. He was believed to govern the wind and the sea, and with his wife Ran to receive all shipwrecked people. He is fabled to have lived in the island of Læssö, was the son of the Jötun Fornjot, who ruled over Jötland, and had two brothers, Wind and Fire.

"'How is the wind called?' 'The son of Fornjot, the brother of Ægir and of the Fire.' 'How is the fire called?' 'The brother of the wind and of Ægir'" (Skáldskaparmál, cc. 27, 28).

"Then Gangleri said, 'Whence comes the wind? He is so strong that he moves large oceans and stirs up the fire, but however strong he is he cannot be seen, so he must be strangely shaped.' Hár answered, 'I can tell thee easily. On the northern end of heaven there sits a jötun called Hrœsvelg in an eagle's shape; when he flaps his wings the winds rise from under them'" (Gylfaginning, c. 18).

The Sagas teem with poetical and allegoric expressions about the sea, the wind, fire, ships, &c., &c. The sea is called—

Ymir's blood.	The land of Ægir's daughters.
Ran's husband.	The land of the ships.

[1] The name of Ægir is found in Helgi Hundingsbani i., st. 30; in Lokasenna; in Hymiskvida; that of Rán, in Helgi Hjorvardsson, 18; Helgi Hundingsbani, i. 3; Egil's Saga, &c.

The sea king's road.
The house of the sands.
The land of the fishing tackle.
The land of the sea birds.
The land of the fishes.
The land of the keel.
The land of the ship's beaks.
The necklace of the earth.
The belt of the earth.
The father of the billow.
The father of the nine daughters of Ægir.
The glittering home.
The clashing chain of the rock.
The hidden path.

It is also called the land of different sea kings.

In Virgil the sea is called Arva Neptuni, the fields of Neptune. In the North it is called the land of Ægir, or Ran.

The sky which hangs over land and water was called—

The tub of the wind.
The helmet of the wind.
The wash-basin of the winds.
The highway of the moon.
The tent of the sun.
The hall of the moon.
The hall of the mountains.
The wind weaver.
The dripping hall.
The sea of mist.
The upper world, &c.

The wind and storms are called—

Ægir's brother.
The brother of fire.
The wolf of the earth.
The wolf of the sail.
The bane of the ships.
The bane of the woods.
The stone-mad = very mad.
The coldly dressed.
The crasher, clasher.
The soother, comforter.
The squall maker.
The whistler, howler.
The breaker of the tree.
The dog of the sail.
The breaker of the rigging.
The shower driver.
The one madly rushing.
The never silent, &c.

The ice against which ships had to contend was called—

The heaven of the deep.
The roof of the salmon hall (the sea).
The elk's gallows.

The rocks were called—

The bones of the sea.
The bones of the earth.

The anchor was called—

The one with the cold nose.

The clouds are called—

The harbinger of the shower.
The wind floating.
The strength of the storm.
The hiding helmet, &c.

The hail—

The stones of the clouds.

The rain—

The tears of the clouds.

The Asar wanted to get a kettle large enough for them all, and sent Thór to the jötun Hýmir to get it from him. Thor went, and we have from the Later Edda the story about his fishing for the serpent with Hýmir. He came back with the kettle after having slain many Jötnar.

"Ægir, who is also called Gymir, had made ale for the Asar when he had got the large cauldron which has been told of. To that feast came Odin and his wife Frigg. Thor did not come, for he was in Austrveg (eastern lands). Sif, Thór's wife, Bragi and his wife Idun were there. Týr was there; he had only one hand. The Fenris-wolf tore off his hand when he was tied. Njörd and his wife Skadi, Frey and Freyja, Vidar, Odin's son, Loki, Beyggvir and Beyla, the servants of Frey, were there. Many Asar and Alfar were there. Ægir had two servants, Fimafeng and Eldir; shining gold was used instead of lights there; the ale carried itself; there was a great peace-place (*grida stad*)" (Lokasenna).

"A man is called Ægir, or Hler; he lived on the island now called Hlésey (Læssö on the Kattegat); he was very skilled in witchcraft. He went on a journey to Asgard; when the Asar knew this he was well received, but with many ocular delusions. In the evening, when they were going to drink, Odin had swords carried into the hall; they were so bright that they shone, and no other light was used while they sat drinking. Then the Asar went to their feast, and the twelve Asar who were to be judges sat down in high-seats. Their names are: Thór, Njörd, Frey, Týr, Heimdall, Bragi, Vidar, Vali, Ull, Hœnir, Forseti, Loki. Also the Asynjur: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjon, Idun, Gerd, Sigun, Fulla, Nanna. Ægir thought that all looked splendid there. The walls were all covered over with fine shields, the mead was strong, and much of it was drunk" (Bragarœdur).

"Why is gold called the fire of Ægir? The following tale is told of it. Ægir, as has been told, had been invited to a feast in Asgard, and when he was ready to go home he invited Odin and all the Asar to visit him in three months. On that journey went Odin, Njörd, Frey, Týr, Bragi, Vidar, Loki, and the Asynjur Frigg, Freyja, Gefjon, Skadi, Idun, Sif. Thór was not there; he had gone to the eastern lands to slay Tröll. When the gods had seated themselves, Ægir had *lýsigull* (light gold, bright gold) brought in on the floor of the hall, which lighted up and brightened the hall like fire, as

the swords do in Valhalla. Loki quarrelled with all the gods and killed Fimafeng, Ægir's thrall; another of his thralls was called Eldir.

Early the gods of the slain (the Asar)
Took their food,
And at the feast
Ere they were satisfied
Shook the twigs
And looked on the blood,
They found there was
Enough at Ægir's.
(Hymis Kvida, 1.)

Ran, who was the wife of Ægir, and like him also worshipped, was supposed to have a net in which she caught all those who were lost at sea, and the people seem to have been superstitious as to the manner in which shipwrecked persons were received by her.

"Ægir's wife is called Ran, and their nine daughters have been named before. At that feast everything came by itself, food and drink and all that was necessary for the feast. The Asar became aware that Ran owned a net in which she caught all men that came out on the sea. Now this saying relates why the gold is called the fire,[1] or the light or the brightness of Ægir, or Ran, or Ægir's daughters" (Skáldskaparmál, c. 33).

The nine daughters of Ægir and Ran had names emblematic of the sea and its waves.

In the Later Edda (Skáldskaparmál), c. 25, we read—

"How is the sea to be called? Ymir's blood, the visitor of the gods, the husband of Ran, the father of Ægir's daughters, who have the following names:—

"*Himinglœfa*—the heaven glittering (implying the glittering of the sun and moon on the waves).

"*Dùfa*—the dove (symbolising the stillness of a quiet sea, heaving up and down gently.

"*Blódughaddа*—the bloody-haired (so named from the sunset or blood giving colour to the waves).

"*Hefring*—the hurling, heaving—may mean the overdrifting, moving heavily along by a gale.

"*Unn* (*Ud*)—the loving or beloved one.

"*Hrönn*—the towering one.

[1] In poetry gold is often called Ægir's fire, or Ran's light, showing that belief in the old myth still existed.

"*Bylgja*—the billowing, swelling one.
"*Bara*—the one carrying, lashing against the rocks.
"*Kólga.*—the cooling one."

"Thorod had been lost with his men at sea, and the wreck was thrown up on the shore, but no bodies. His wife and son invited the neighbours to the *arvel*.[1] The first evening of the *arvel*, when the men had sat down in their seats, Thorod and his companions walked into the hall, all wet. They were well received, for this was thought a good omen; men in those days believed that drowned men had been well received by Ran, if they visited their own *arvel*, for there still remained some of the old beliefs, although men had been baptized, and were named Christians" (Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 54).

In Hervarar Saga, Gest asks King Heidrek, "Who are those widows who, according to the habits of their fathers, live together, and who seldom are partial to men, &c.?" The latter replies: "They are Ægir's daughters (the waves); they always go three together, and the winds awaken them."

Egil's son Bödvar having been drowned, the old father in his grief over his loss composed a poem about him. Vol. ii., p. 416.

Very roughly has Ran
Handled me,
I am very much bereft
Of beloved friends.
The sea tore asunder
The ties of my kin,
A string twisted[2]
By myself.

Knowest thou that
If I avenged this[3] with the sword
Then the *ale-smith*[4]
Would be luckless.[5]
If I could slay
The brother of the upheaver of waves[6]
I would go and fight
Against the wife of Ægir.

But I did not
Think I had
Strength to fight a battle
Against the *plank-bane*,[7]
For the helplessness
Of an old man
Is before the eyes
Of all people.

Ran has me
Robbed of much;
It is bitter to tell
Of a kinsman's death
Since my family-shield[8]
Parted from life
To the *joy-ways*.[9]

(Egil's Saga, c. 81.)

[1] Inheritance feast; see Vol. ii., p. 47.
[2] He calls his son Bödvar a string of his family, made or twisted by himself.
[3] The son's death.
[4] Ægir, who brewed ale for the Asar.
[5] This passage means—"If I could get my son avenged, Ægir would fare badly."
[6] The upheaver of the waves was the wind = Kari; his brother was Ægir.
[7] Plank-bane = ship-destroyer; *i.e.*, Ægir.
[8] Egil being old, Bödvar is called the family shield or protector.
[9] Dwellings of joy (Valhalla).

Fridthjof, for having violated the peace of Baldr's temple, was condemned by the Kings, Helgi and Hálfdán, to proceed to the Orkneys to collect the tribute from Angantyr the Jarl.

"Then came a wave dashing so strongly that it carried away the gunwales and part of the bows, and flung four men overboard, who were all lost.

"'Now it is likely,' said Fridthjof, 'that some of our men will visit Ran. We will not be thought fit to come there unless we prepare ourselves well. I think it right that every man should carry some gold with him.' He cut asunder the ring of Ingibjörg and divided it among his men, and sang—

We will cut the red ring
Which the rich father
Of Hálfdán owned.
Before Ægir slays us.

Gold shall be seen on the guests
In the middle of the hall of Ran,
If we need night quarters there,
That befits open-handed warriors.

(Fridthjof's Saga, ch. vi.)

CHAPTER XXVII.

RELIGION.—SACRIFICES TO THE ALFAR, DISIR, FYLGJA, HAMINGJA, AND LANDVŒTTIR.

Sacrifices to the Alfar—Early worship of the Alfar—Spirits of the Alfar—Sacrifices to the Disir—Ceremonies attending the sacrifices—The Fylgja and Hamingja or following and family spirits—They take various shapes—They appear in dreams—Guardian spirits of the land.

THE people made sacrifices to the Alfar (*Alfa-blót*) mentioned in the earlier Edda, as well as to the Asar and Disir, who we have seen were closely related to the former.[1] These sacrifices, of which there are few accounts, and which seem to have been made in houses, are perhaps traces of a religion previous to that of Odin of the North.

King Olaf Haraldsson sent as messengers to Olaf, King of Sweden, Björn, his marshal, and the Icelandic scald Sigvat. After leaving Norway they went across the Eidaforest.

"Then they went through Gautland, and one evening came to a farm called Hof. The door was shut and they could not enter; the husband and wife said it was holy there, and they went away. Then they came to another farm; the housewife stood at the door and asked them not to go in, saying they were holding *Alfa-blót*. Sigvat sang:—

Do not go farther in,
Wretched man;
I fear the wrath of Odin,
We are heathens.

(St. Olaf's Saga, c. 92.)

We have seen that the Alfar, from whom some people claimed their descent, as others did from the Asar, were of two kinds, and dwelt at Alfheim, not far from the Urd well by the ash Yggdrasil. They made the fetter *Gleipnir*, with which

[1] Alfheim was given to Frey as a tooth-fee.

the Fenris-wolf was kept tied; also the ship *Skidbladnir*, Odin's spear *Gungnir*, and Sif's golden hair, &c.

"Why is gold called the hair of Sif? 'Loki, son of Lanfey, had, through cunning, cut off all the hair of Sif (wife of Thor). When Thor knew it he took Loki and would have crushed every bone in him if he had not sworn to get the Svartalfar (black Alfar) to make hair of gold for Sif which would grow like other hair. Thereafter Loki went to the Dvergar, called the sons of Ivaldi,[1] and they made the hair and *Skidbladnir* and the spear of Odin, *Gungnir*. Then Loki staked his head to the Dverg Brok that his brother Sindri would not be able to make three things as good as these. When they came to the smithy, Sindri laid the skin of a swine on the hearth and asked Brok to blow (the bellows), and not to stop before he had taken from the hearth what he had put on it. When he had left the forge and Brok had made the bellows blow, a fly[2] sat down on his hand and pecked at it; he continued until the smith took from the hearth a boar with golden bristles. Then Sindri put gold on the hearth and asked him to blow and not to stop till he came back. He went, and the fly came and sat down on his neck and pecked twice as hard, but he blew until the smith took from the hearth a gold ring called *Draupnir*. Then Sindri laid iron on the hearth and asked him to blow, as this would be of no use if he stopped it. Then the fly settled down between his eyes and pecked at his eyelids. When the blood ran down into his eyes so that he saw nothing he swept away the fly as quickly as he could, and the bellows fell down; then the smith came and said that now all that was on the hearth had been made nearly useless. He took a hammer from it and gave all these (three) things to his brother Brok, and asked him to take them to Asgard for the wager. . . . Loki gave to Odin the spear *Gungnir*, to Thor the hair for Sif, to Frey *Skidbladnir*. . . . Then Brok gave the ring (*Draupnir*) to Odin, and said that every ninth night eight rings equally heavy would drop from it; he gave the boar to Frey, and said it could run over sea and air by night and day faster than any horse, and that the night or mijrk-heimar (the black world) would never get so dark but there would be enough light from the shining of its mane. He gave the hammer to Thor, and said that whatever he met, however large the object was, he might strike it with the hammer and it would never fail; if he threw it at anything it

[1] Here we see that Svartálfar are Dvergar.

[2] From this it is supposed that Loki had come in the shape of a fly to make them lose the wager.

would never miss, and never go so far as not to come back into his hand'" (Skáldskaparmal, 35).

"Ragnar (the son of Sigurd Hring) grew up in his father's hird; he was taller and handsomer than any man people had seen, and like his mother and her kin to look at, for it is known from all old sayings about the people that are called Alfar that they were much finer than other kinds of men in the northern lands. The parents of his mother Alfhild and all her kin sprung from Alf the old" (Sögubrot, c. 10).

"The land which King Álf ruled was called Alfheim, and all the people that spring from him are of the Alfa-kin; next after the Risar they were finer than other people. King Alf was married to Bryngerd, daughter of King Raum, in Raumariki; she was tall but not handsome, for Raum was ugly;[1] the men who are tall and ugly are called *raumar*" (Thorstein's Saga Vikingssonar, c. 1).

The people thought that the spirits of the Alfar sometimes lived not far from human habitations.

Kormak and Thorvard had fought, and the latter had been wounded; he recovered slowly, and as soon as he could get on his feet went to find Thordis (a Volva), and inquired how he could best recover his health. He replied:—

"A short distance from here there is a hill, in which Alfar live. Thou must get the bull, which Kormak killed, and with its blood redden the outside of the hill, and make a feast for the Alfar of the meat, and thou wilt recover" (Kormak's Saga, c. 22).

Disa-blót.—The sacrifices offered to the Disir, or genii who specially guarded men and families and appeared when important events happened,[2] seem to have been performed by women only, and to have been usually made in the autumn or winter nights; sometimes human sacrifices were made to them.

This worship from its very nature was probably of great antiquity, and belonged to the religion practised by the Asar.

The earliest account of a *Disa-blót* is in Hervarar Saga.

"A man named Arngrim was a Risi and mountain dweller,

[1] Other texts—Raum and his kinsmen were tall and ugly.

[2] Cf. Gisli Sursson, 22, 24, 30, 33; Half's Saga, 15; Grimnismal, 53; Atlamal, 23. Fylgjas appeared to people in dreams: Ljósvetninga, 21; Atlamal, 19; Njal, 12.

who took Ama Ymi's daughter from Ymisland, and married her; their son was Hergrim, called *half-Tröll*. He was sometimes with the mountain Risar, and sometimes with men; he had the strength of a Jötun; was much skilled in witchcraft and a great Berserk;[1] he carried off Ogn Alfasprengi from Jötunheim and married her; they had a son called Grim. Starkad then lived at Ölfossar; he was by kin a Thurs, and like them in strength and nature; his father was Störkvid. Ogn Alfasprengi was betrothed to Starkad, but Hergrim took her from him while he was travelling north over Elivágar; when he came back he asked him to give him back his wife, and at the same time challenged him to 'holmganga.'[2] They fought at the uppermost waterfall at Eydi. Starkad had eight hands, and fought with four swords at once. He won the victory, and Hergrim fell. Ogn was looking on, and when Hergrim had fallen she stabbed herself and would not marry Starkad. Starkad took all the property of Hergrim with him, and also his son Grim, who grew up with him, and was both tall and strong. King Alf, who ruled in Alfheimar, had a daughter Alfhild. At that time the land between Gautelf and Raumelf was called Alfheimar. One autumn there was a great *disablót* (sacrifice to the Disir)[3] at King Alf's, and Alfhild went to it; she was more beautiful than any other woman, and all the people in Alfheimar were handsomer than other people at that time; but in the night, as she was reddening the *hörg* with blood, Starkad Aludreng took her away to his home. Then King Alf invoked Thor to seek for Alfhild, and Thor killed Starkad, and made Alfhild go home to her father, and Grim the son of Hergrim with her. When Grim was twelve winters old he went into warfare and became one of the greatest warriors; he married Bauggerd, the daughter of Alfhild and Starkad. He settled on an island in Halogaland called *Bólm*, and was therefrom called Eygrim Bólm; their son was Arngrim Berserk, who afterwards lived in Bólm, and was a most famous warrior" (Hervarar Saga, c. 1).

"King Eirik Bloodaxe and Gunnhild came the same evening to Atli, where Bard had prepared a great feast for him, and there was to be a *disablót*. There was much drinking and feasting in the hall. The king asked where Bard was, for he saw him nowhere. A man replied: 'Bard is outside helping

[1] See Vol. ii., p. 423.

[2] A kind of duel. See p. 563.

[3] The worship of the Lares and Penates, the household deities who watched over the personal and pecuniary interests of individuals and families, was the most prominent feature of the Etruscan mythology, whence it was borrowed by the Romans. Thence it was also, in all probability, that the Romans obtained their doctrine of an attendant genius watching over every individual from his birth. (See Dennis's 'Etruria,' *vol. i.*, p. 59.)

his guests.' 'Who are those guests,' inquired the king, 'that he thinks it more his duty to be there than inside with us?' The man told him they were the huskarlar (servants) of Thorir hersir. The king added: 'Go to them as speedily as possible, and call them in here.' When they came, the king received Ölvir well, and made him sit opposite him in the high-seat, and his men on both sides of him. Egil was next to Ölvir; then ale was brought in, and many memorial toasts were drunk, a horn to be emptied at each. As the evening was drawing to a close many of Ölvir's men became drunk; some of them vomited in the hall, but others went outside" (Egil's Saga, c. 44).

Even at Upsala sacrifices were offered to the Disir.

"King Adils was at a *disablót*, and rode on a horse round the disarsal (hall of the Disir); his horse stumbled and fell, and the king was thrown off, and his head hit a stone so that it broke and his brains lay on the stone. This caused his death. He died at Uppsalir, and is mound-laid there; the Swedes called him a powerful king" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 33).

Among the Disir two women, who are mentioned several times in the Sagas, seem to have been regarded as special objects of worship. These are the sisters Thorgerd Hörgabrud, or Hölgabrud, and Yrpa. The name of Hörgabrud signifies the bride of the altars, and indicates her supposed holiness; and the second name, Hölgabrud, undoubtedly shows that she has been especially worshipped in Hálogaland, whence the family of the great Hakon Jarl hailed; thus Thorgerd and her sister came to be the special guardians of that family (see Human Sacrifice, page 367).

"A king called Hölgi, after whom Hálogaland is named, is said to have been the father of Thorgerd Hölgabrud. To both of them sacrifices were made, and a mound was raised for Hölgi; one layer was of gold and silver, which were offerings, and another was of earth and stones" (Later Edda (Skáldskaparmál), c. 45).

The Disir are often spoken of as Fylgja (following spirit), and Hamingja (good luck or family spirit); but there must have been some distinction between them and the Disir proper, as no sacrifices were offered to the Hamingja and Fylgja.[1]

[1] (1) Viga Glum, 9; (2) Laxdæla, 26; Snorri, St. Olaf, 68.

The latter seem to be synonymous, but the former spirit, which at the hour of death left the dying person and passed to a dear son, was the more personal, and it was believed that it could be transmitted from one man to another.

The expressions *kynfylgja* (kinguardians), *attarfylgja* (family guardians), which sometimes occur in the Sagas, seem to indicate a belief that the eminent qualities of a family were protected by these spirits.

King Volsung married his daughter Signy to King Siggeir. When Siggeir departed—

"Signy said to her father: 'I do not want to go with Siggeir, and my mind does not feel love towards him, and I know by my foresight, and from our *kynfylgja*, that this marriage will cause much sorrow to us if it is not soon broken off" (Volsunga Saga, c. 4).

Sometimes the guardian spirit of one man would follow another. Thorstein went to find the Dverg Sindri, and gave him good gifts, and they separated with the greatest friendship. The Dverg said—

"Now must we separate for some time, and fare thee well. I tell thee that my *Disir* will constantly follow thee. Thereupon Thorstein went to his boat and rowed to his men" (Thorstein Vikingsson, ch. xxii.).

"At the time when Olaf came to Gardariki there were many men in Hólmgard who foretold future things; they all could tell by their wisdom that the *fylgjas* of a young foreigner had come into the country, and that these were so lucky-looking that never had they seen the fylgjas of any man like them; but they knew not who or whence he was; nevertheless they showed with many words that the bright light shining over him would spread all over Gardariki and widely through the eastern half of the world" (Fornmanna Sögur, I. c. 57).

"Glum dreamed one night that he was standing outside his farm, and looking over the fjord, and that he saw a woman going up the district from the sea, and walking towards Thverá (the farm of Glum). She was so large that her shoulders touched the mountains on both sides of the valley; he went from the house to meet her, and invited her to him, and then he awoke. All thought it marvellous, but he said: 'The dream is great and remarkable; but thus will I interpret

it: that my mother's father Vigfus must be dead, and that woman who was taller than the mountains is probably his hamingja, for he surpassed others in most things of honour, and his luck will dwell where I am.' Next summer, when ships arrived from Norway, the death of Vigfus was heard of" (Viga Glum, c. 9).

The shapes of the various *Fylgjas* can best be found from the forms in which the people thought they perceived them. They were inherited from one man by his descendants and even relatives, so that some families had their permanent guardianship; to them accordingly was often ascribed the success of some individuals.

The shapes most frequently assumed were those of birds and animals, and in some such shape every man was supposed to have his *fylgja* indicative of his character; cunning people were said to have foxes for their *fylgja;* fierce warriors, wolves; great chiefs, eagles, oxen, bears, and other animals.[1] From numerous Sagas we find that they frequently assumed the shape of bears, which went in front of the persons they wanted to guard, and sometimes presented themselves in the form of the human being whose genii they were, but *never* in the *shape of women*[2] like the Disir proper. Those of the deceased were believed to warn their relatives, kinsmen, and friends, and appeared at or before important events in the life of the person whom they guarded, sometimes while he was awake, but as a rule in dreams, and it was believed that a sudden sleepiness foreboded their coming. Wherever those under their protection went they accompanied them, preceding them to such places as they intended to visit.

When Halfred while on a voyage to Iceland fell sick—

"A woman was seen to walk along the ship; she was large and had on a coat of mail, and walked on the waves as if on land. Halfred looked and saw that it was his female guardian

[1] The eagles dreamt of by Angantyr were thought to be the fylgjas of champions (Hervarar Saga, c. 5).

Thorstein Vikingsson saw in the many bears which attacked him a foreboding of a king or a king's son (Gautrek and Hrolf's Saga; Thorstein Vikingsson, c. 12).

Thus also Geitir guessed the birth of Thorstein Uxafot from the white bear cub, which he had observed walking ahead of the latter.

[2] Njala, 12; Finnbogi Rammi's Saga; Fornmanna Sögur, iii. They are seen in a walking state. Viga Glum's Saga; Halfred's Saga, 22, 24; Vatnsdæla, p. 36; Atlamal, 19; Egil's Saga, 50, 60; Sögubrot, 2.

(fylgja-kona), and said: "I declare myself altogether sundered from thee.' She asked, 'Wilt thou, Thorvald, receive me?' He replied he would not. Then Halfred the young (a son of the poet Halfred) said, 'I will receive thee;' she then vanished. Then Halfred said: 'I will give to thee, my son, the sword of the king, but the other things shall be laid in my coffin if I die on board the ship.' He sang ('God rules; I fear hell; every man must die'). A little after he died, and was laid in a coffin with his things, a cloak, a helmet, and a ring, and then thrown overboard" (Halfredar Saga, c. 11).

The chief Hall of Sida had a feast. In the night Thidrandi his son heard some one knocking repeatedly at the door, and went out with a sword in his hand.

"He heard the sound of horses' feet from the north, and saw nine women[1] riding in black clothes with drawn swords in their hands. He also heard horse-feet from the south, and saw nine women all in white clothes on white horses. He wanted to go in and tell this vision to people, but the black-dressed women were quicker and attacked him, while he defended himself valiantly.

"A long while after Thórhall (one of the guests) awoke and asked if Thidrandi was awake, and got no answer. He said it was too late. They went out. The moon shone and the weather was frosty. They found Thidrandi lying wounded" (Fornmanna Sögur).

"One summer King Ivar Vidfadmi went with his host west from Sweden to Reidgotaland, and landed in Selund. He sent word to his son-in-law Hrœrek to come to him; he told this to Aud his wife, who asked if he intended to go to meet his kinsman and invite him to a feast on shore. In the evening, when King Hrœrek retired, Aud had prepared a new bed with all the clothes in it new, and placed it on the middle of the floor; she requested him to sleep therein, to remember what he dreamt, and tell it her in the morning; and she made herself another bed. In the morning, when asked about his dream, 'I dreamt,' he said, 'that I was standing near a forest, beside a fine level field, and there saw a stag. Then a wild beast, with a mane like gold, ran out of the forest; the stag thrust its horns under the shoulder of the beast, and it fell dead. There-

[1] The nine women in black had been the Disir of the family, which was going to forsake the old belief; the Disir wanted to take with them the best member of the family before they left. Therefore they slew Thidrandi, whom the nine white Disir try in vain to defend. The nine white Disir were to be the guardian spirit of the family after it had adopted the new belief. From this we can see that the new religion could not entirely overthrow the old superstition and belief.

upon I saw a large dragon fly to where the stag was, at once seize it in its claws, and tear it asunder. Then I saw a she-bear with her cub, which the dragon wanted to take, but the bear defended it; and then I awoke.' She answered: 'This is a remarkable dream; and beware thou of King Ivar, my father, that he does not deceive thee when thou meetest him, for thou hast seen kings' *fylgjas*, and there will be fights with them, and it will be well if this stag is not thy own *fylgja*, which seems most likely to me"[1] (Sögubrot, c. 2).

"That morning Thorstein awoke in his room, and said: 'Art thou awake, Thórir?' 'I am,' answered Thórir, 'but have slept till now.' Thorstein said: 'I want to get ready to go away from this room, for I know that Jökull will come hither to-day with many men.' 'I do not think so,' said Thórir, 'and will not go; but how hast thou found it out?' 'I dreamt,' said Thorstein, 'that thirty wolves ran hither and seven bears, with an eighth red-cheeked bear, which was large and fierce; with them also were two she-foxes, which ran ahead of the flock and were rather fierce-looking; I disliked them most. All the wolves attacked us, and it seemed to me that at last they tore all my brothers asunder, except thee alone; but nevertheless thou didst fall. Many thought I was killed by the bears, but I killed all the wolves and the smaller she-fox; then I fell. What thinkest thou this dream signifies?' said Thórir. 'I think,' said Thorstein, 'that the large red-cheeked bear is Jökul's *fylgja*, but that the other bears are the *fylgja* of his brothers, and all the wolves I have seen are men with them, for they are likely to show the tempers of wolves to us. With regard to the two she-foxes, I do not know the men who have those *fylgja;* I think they have lately come to Jökul, and they must be disliked by most men'" (Thorstein Vikingsson, c. 12).

The child of an Icelandic woman by name of Orny, having been exposed,[2] was saved by a bondi named Krumm, and by him raised as his own, and called Thorstein. One day when the boy was seven years of age Krumm went with him to Krossavik, where the grandfather of the boy, Geitir, lived. While there he rushed forward on the floor, as is the habit of children, stumbled and fell. As Geitir laughed, the boy asked him why he found it so funny. Geitir answered:—

[1] Persuaded by Ivar Vidfadmi, Hrœrek slew his brother Helgi, thinking he was too good friends with his wife. Afterwards Ivar slew Hrœrek in a fight. In the dream Hrœrek is the stag, Helgi is the wild beast, Ivar is the dragon, and the she-bear with the cub is Aud with her son.

[2] See Exposure of Children, Vol. II., p. 39.

"'It is true; for I saw that which thou didst not see.' 'What was it?' said Thorstein. 'I can tell thee. When thou camest into the room a young white bear followed thee, and ran before thee on the floor; when he saw me he stopped, but thou didst rush on and stumble over the young bear; I think thou art not the son of Krumm, but of higher kin'"[1] (Fornmanna Sögur, iii. p. 113).

"He (Thórhalli) dreamt a dream and went northward to Finni. When he came to the door he said: 'I should like thee to explain a dream which I have dreamt.' Finni said: 'Go; I will not hear thy dream,' and pushed the door and said: 'Go away as quick as thou canst, and tell it to Gudmund of Mödruvellir, or else thou shalt be driven away with weapons at once.' Then he went away to Mödruvellir. Gudmund had ridden that day out into the district and was expected home that night. Einar, his brother, lay down and fell asleep. He dreamt that an ox, very fine-looking, with large horns, walked up through the district; it walked up to Mödruvellir and went to every house of the farm, and at last to the high-seat, and there fell dead. Thereupon Einar said: 'This forebodes great tidings, and this is the fylgja of a man.' Then Gudmund came home, and it was his custom to go to every house of the farm bœr. When he had come to his high-seat he leant back and talked with Thórhalli, who told him his dream. Then he rose in the seat when food was brought. It was hot milk, warmed with stones. Gudmund said: 'This is not hot.' Thorlaug said: 'Now I do not know where thy liking for the heat comes from.' He drank again and said: 'This is not hot.' Then he sank backward and was dead. Thorlaug said: 'This is great tidings, which will be heard widely; no man shall touch him, and often has Einar had forebodings of lesser tidings.' Then Einar came and prepared the body and said: 'Thy dream, *Thórhalli, has* no small power,[2] and Finni has seen in thee that the man to whom thou didst tell the dream would be death-fated, and he liked Gudmund to become so. Cold must he have been inside, as he did not feel anything'" (Ljósvetninga, c. 21).

The country as well as the people had its guardian spirits, or *Landvœttir*, by which it and its inhabitants were protected, and which were supposed to assume different shapes. What the Disir and Hamingja were to the family, the Landvœttir were to the whole or a large tract of the country; and though they were sometimes attached to special men, whom they

[1] Cf. also Orvar Odd's Saga, c. 4.

[2] This dream seems to have had the power to make the first man who heard it death-fated.

followed, they were more closely connected with the land than with the people, and there was a heathen law in Iceland preventing the people from disturbing them.

They were subordinate to the guardian gods of each country, and excited dreams in men, and on behalf of the guardian god watched over those places at which they dwelt; they especially liked to dwell on mountains, and sometimes the dead were assigned places with them.[1]

"It was the beginning of the heathen laws that men should not go with a head-ship (with dragon-heads) out on the main sea, or, if they did, they should take the heads off before they saw land, and not approach it with gaping heads and yawning snouts, that the *landvœttir* might not be frightened" (Landnama, c. 7).

These landvœttir sometimes loved special men, and followed them.

"Björn (an Icelander) dreamt one night that a rock-dweller came to him and offered to enter into partnership with him, and he consented. Thereafter a he-goat came to his goats, and they increased so much that he soon became very rich. After this he was called He-goat Björn. *Second-sighted* men saw that all *landvœttir* followed He-goat Björn to the *Thing*, and Thorstein and Thórd (his brothers) to hunting and fishing" (Landnama, iv. c. 12).

Egil, fleeing from the pursuit of King Eirik Bloodaxe and his men, got a vessel to go to Iceland.

"And when they were ready to sail Egil went upon an island. He took into his hand a hazel-pole and went on a projecting rock, pointing landwards. He took a horse's head and fastened it upon the pole; then he said the following words: 'Here I raise a pole as a curse, and I turn this curse upon King Eirik and Queen Gunnhild.' He turned the horse's head so that it pointed landwards. 'I turn this curse on the guardian spirits who dwell in this country, so that they shall all go astray, and no one of them shall meet or find his home until they have driven King Eirik and Gunnhild from the land. He thrust the pole into a rift in the rock, and let it stand there; he carved runes on the pole which told all this imprecation. Thereupon he went on board ship and sailed" (Egil's Saga, c. 60).

[1] Cf. Ólaf Tryggvason's Saga, p. 37.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VALHÖLL-VALHALLA.

Influence of the belief in "the hall of the slain"—A warrior's death a pass to Valhalla—Figurative offer of warriors to Odin—Self-sacrifice to Odin—Entrance to Valhalla—Food and drink in Valhalla—Odin's welcome to warriors.

THE belief in a Valhalla (the hall of the slain) by the ancestors of the English tribes was destined to exert a most potent influence upon the future history of Europe. It made the people of the North most powerful and skilled warriors; it infused into their minds an utter disregard of death, and led them to accomplish great deeds of valour in their own and distant lands. To fall gloriously on a battle-field was held to assure a certain entry to Valhalla; it was a sign of the favour of Odin. This part of the Valhalla faith was so deeply rooted in the minds of the people that it lasted to the very end of the Pagan era, or about the 12th century.

In Grinismal, which gives a description of the home of some of the gods and of the goddesses, Freya and Saga, we read:—

Gladsheim[1] is the fifth called
Where the gleaming
Valhalla stands;
There Hropt (Odin) chooses
Every day
Weapon-dead men.[2]

That hall is very
Easily known to those
Who come to Odin;
The hall is roofed with shafts;
It is thatched with shields;
The benches are strewn with
brynja.[3]

That hall is very
Easily known to those
Who come to Odin;
A wolf hangs[4]
West of the door;
An eagle hovers above it.

Five hundred doors
And forty more
I think are in Valhalla;
Eight hundred *Einherjar*[5]
Go through a door at once
When they go to fight the wolf.

[1] Gladsheim = Home of the glad.
[2] Men slain by weapons.
[3] Coats of mail or chain armour.
[4] The word in the text means "hangs," and it is impossible to tell if the wolf is living or dead; it may mean that the wolf is ready to pounce.
[5] Odin's warriors. In Ragnarök these Einherjar fight with Odin against the Fenri wolf.

To those men of old, death was but one of the phases of their lives; it had no terrors for them, and they faced it smilingly, bravely, and contentedly. It was in their eyes preferable to dishonour, or the humiliation of defeat; vanquisher and vanquished when dying parted friends, and praised the deeds of each other, one bidding the other speed to Valhalla as the fire was lighted on the pyre, or as the burning ship that was to consume the body sailed from the shore. The victor often mourned that he had not been among the slain and chosen, and consoled himself by thinking that he must obtain more renown and do braver deeds before he could aspire to meet Odin. There is something grand and noble in this despising of life, and in aspiring, during its continuance, to do great and noble deeds.

Before the fight the combatants told each other that they would go to Valhalla, and the hosts of the enemy were figuratively given to Odin by throwing a spear over them;[1] King Vikar, of Hördaland, was thus given to the god by his mother.[2] Odin himself steered Harald Hilditönn's war-waggon in the battle, and killed his favourites with Harald's weapons for he was old, and could not bear the brunt of any more fighting. Eirik the victorious threw over Styrbjörn's host the spear which Odin gave him, accompanying the action with the words "Odin owns you all."

"King Vikar sailed from Agdir north to Hördaland with many men. He stayed a long time in some islands and had strong headwinds. They threw chips (sacrifice-chips) to get fair wind, and it fell thus that Odin was to receive a man out of the host to be hanged by drawing of lots. The host was divided for lot-drawing, and the lot of King Vikar was drawn. At this all grew silent, and it was resolved that the counsellors should next day have a meeting about the difficulty. About midnight Hrosshársgrani (Odin) roused his foster-son Starkad, and asked him to go with him. They took a little boat and rowed to an islet inside the island. They walked up to a wood, and found a clearing crowded with men. A *Thing* was held there, and eleven men sat on chairs, but the twelfth was not occupied. They went forward to the *Thing*, and Hrosshársgrani (Odin)

[1] Voluspa, 24; Hervarar Saga, 5; Eyrbyggja, 44; Fornmanna Sögur, v. 250. Harald Hilditönn was given to Odin at his birth (cf. Saxo). He was victorious all his life till his last battle.

[2] Cf. also Gautrek's Saga, c. 7.

sat down on the twelfth chair. They all greeted Odin. He said that the judges should judge about the fate of Starkad. Thor said: 'Álfhild, the mother of Starkad's father, chose a bad Jötun as father for her son instead of Asathór, and I forecast for Starkad that he shall neither have a son nor a daughter, and thus end his kin.' Odin answered: 'I forecast for him that he shall live as long as the lives of three men.' Thor said: 'He shall do a *nithing's* deed in each of the three lives.' Odin answered: 'I forecast for him that he shall have the best weapons and clothes.' Thor said: 'I forecast for him that he shall neither own land nor sea.' Odin answered: 'I give him that he shall have very much loose property.' Thor said: 'I lay on him a spell which shall make him think he never has enough.' Odin answered: 'I give him victory and skill in every fight.' Thor said: 'He shall become maimed in every fight.' Odin said: 'I give him skaldship so that he shall make poetry as quickly as he talks.' Thor said: 'He shall not remember the poetry he makes.' Odin said: 'I forecast for him that he be thought the greatest by the most high-born and best men.' Thor said: 'He shall be disliked by all people.' The judges judged all that they had said of Starkad to be his fate, and then the *Thing* was dissolved. Hrosshársgrani and Starkad went to their boat. Hrosshársgrani said to Starkad: 'Now thou must reward me well, foster-son, for the help I gave thee.' Starkad assented. 'Then,' said Grani, 'thou shalt send King Vikar to me, and I will tell thee how to do it.' He handed Starkad a spear, and said it would look like a reed. They came back to the host when it was nearly day. The next morning the counsellors of the king met to take counsel, and agreed to make some semblance of sacrifice, and Starkad told their counsel. There stood a fir-tree near them, and a high stump near it; low on the fir was a slender shoot which reached up to the limbs. Servants prepared the food of the men, and a calf was killed and cut up. Starkad had the entrails taken out, mounted the stump, bent down the slender twig, and tied the entrails to it. Then he said to the king: 'Now a gallows is ready for thee, king, and it will not seem very dangerous for men. Go hither and I will lay the string round thy neck.' The king said: 'If this contrivance is not more dangerous than it looks to me, then I do not think it will hurt me; but, if it is otherwise, then fate will rule it.' Then he mounted the stump, and Starkad laid the string round his neck, and stepped down from the stump. Then he struck him with the reed, and said, 'Now I give thee to Odin.' He let go the twig, and the reed changed into a spear which pierced the king; the stump sank down under his feet, the calf's entrails

were turned into a strong withy, and the twig rosé and lifted the king up to the limbs, and there he died" (Gautrek's Saga, c. 1).

Men occasionally sacrificed themselves by throwing themselves from cliffs, so that they might be acceptable to Odin and go to Valhalla.

"Once King Gauti, of Vestr Gautland, was hunting and lost his way; he found a small farm where the people were afraid of him. When he went to bed a girl came to him, and when he asked about her family she answered: 'My father is called Skafnörtung (pincher), because he is so stingy that he cannot bear to see food or anything else which is his decrease; my mother is called Tötra (tattered), because she never wants to wear any clothes but those which are worn and in tatters; she calls that thrift.' The king asked: 'What are the names of thy brothers?' She answered: 'One is called Fjölmódi, the second Imsigul, the third Gilling.' The king asked: 'What art thou and thy sisters called?' She answered: 'My name is Snotra,[1] because I was thought the wisest of us all; my sisters are called Hjötra and Fjötra. There is a rock close to our farm called Gillingshamar, and near it a steep rock, which we call Ætternisstapi (family rock); it is so high and so steep that anything alive falling down from it is killed. We give it the name Ætternisstapi, because by its help we reduce our family in number when it seems to us that some great wonders happen. All our forefathers died there without any sickness, and then went to Odin; we need not have any burden or sulkiness from our fathers and mothers, for this place of joy has been equally easy for all our kinsmen to get to; we need not live with loss of property, or want of food, or any other wonders or portents that may happen. Now my father thinks it the greatest wonder, that thou hast come to our house; it would have been a very uncommon thing even if a man of low birth had taken food here; but this is most strange that a king, chilled and without clothes, has come to us, for that has never before happened. To-morrow my father and mother intend to divide the inheritance, among us their children; they will then with the thrall go down the Ætternisstapi, and journey to Valhalla. My father will reward the thrall for his goodwill, in intending to drive thee from the door, with nothing less than that he shall enjoy the happiness with him, for he is sure that Odin will not go to meet the thrall unless he is in his company.'[2]

[1] One of the goddesses is also called Snotra.

[2] From this we learn that a serf must be in company with some one freeborn in order to go to Odin.

Then she slept with the king, who when he took leave asked her to let their child, if a boy, be called Gautrek.

"When Snotra came home, her father said: 'A great wonder has happened that this king has come to our farm and eaten up a great deal of our property which we least of all wanted to lose. I think we cannot maintain our family on account of poverty, and therefore I have brought together all my property, and want to divide the inheritance between my sons. I and my wife and my thrall intend to go to Valhalla. I cannot reward the thrall better for his faithfulness than by taking him with me; Gilling together with his sister Snotra shall get my good ox; Fjölmódi and his sister Hjötra shall have my gold-bars; Imsigul and his sister Fjötra shall have all the corn and the fields; but I ask you, my children, not to increase your number so that you cannot preserve my inheritance.' When Skafnörtung had said what he liked they all went up on Gillingsrock, and they led their father and mother down on the Ætternisstapi, and they went cheerfully and merrily to Odin. Now when they came home they consulted how to manage; they took wooden pins and pinned the vadmal (thick woollen cloth) round every one, so that none of them touched the other naked; they thought this the best way of preventing their number increasing. Snotra became aware that she was with child; she moved the wooden pin in the vadmal so that she could be touched with the hand, and affected sleep. When Gilling woke he touched her cheek with his hand, and said: 'This is bad that I have hurt thee; it seems to me thou art much stouter than before.' She answered: 'Hide this as well as thou canst.' He said: 'That shame I will not have, for this cannot be hidden when our number is increased.'

"Two black snakes crept on the gold-bars of Fjölmód, who therefore with his wife threw himself down from the Ætternisstapi. Imsigul saw a bird take corn from his field; therefore he and his wife went down from Ætternisstapi. Gilling, the third brother, did the same after Gautrek, Snotra's boy, had slain his ox. Snotra being left alone went to King Gauti" (Gautrek's Saga, c. 1, 2).

The scald Eyvind composed a poem on King Hakon Adalsteinsfostri after his death in the battle of Stord against [illegible]he sons of Eirik Blood-axe, and in this poem we see how he [illegible]le his entrance into Valhalla, and how Odin sent Valkyrias [illegible]oose those he loved.

[illegible]body of King Hakon Adalstein's foster-son, after the [illegible]s carried to Sœheim in Lygrisfjord, in North Hörda-

land, and a mound thrown up over it. Before he fell eight sons of Harald (fair-hair) had been slain in fight, as Eyvind has told, and he has said that the king went to Valhalla, for it was the belief of the heathen that all who died of wounds were taken to Valhalla." [1]

Göndul and Skögul[2]
Gautatýr[3] sent
To choose among kings
Who of Yngvi's kin[4]
Should to Odin go
In Valhalla to dwell.

They found the brother of Björn[5]
Putting on his mail-coat,
The well-endowed king
Stood under the war-banner.
The battle-oars drooped,[6]
The spear trembled,
And then the battle began.

He called to the Halogalanders
And the Rogalanders;
The only slayer of jarls[7]
Walked into the fight;
The generous one had
A good host of Northmen;
The frightener of Eydanir
Stood early under a helmet.[8]

The chief of the host
Ere he began the fight
Stripped himself of his war-dress,
Flung his mail-coat on the plain.
He played with the sons of men;[9]
He had to defend his land;
The merry king[10]
Stood under a gold helmet.

Thus did the sword
In the king's hand
Cut the cloth of Váfad[11]
As if it cut water.
The spears cracked,
The shields were broken.
The clashing swords rattled
Upon the heads of men.

The shields and heads
Of Northmen were trodden
By the hard feet
Of the warriors' hilts.[12]
There was fray on the island,
And the kings reddened
The shining shield-burgh
With the blood of men.

The wound-fires[13] burned
In bloody wounds.
The halberds sunk
Into men's bodies;
The wound-drops gushed[14]
On the cape of swords;[15]
The flood of arrows (blood) swelled
On the shore of Stord.

The gales of Skögul (fights)
Were mingled together
Under the reddened sky of shields;
The clouds (arrows) played about the shields.

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[1] Fagrskinna.
[2] Two Valkyrjas.
[3] Gautatýr = the god of the Gautar = Odin.
[4] Yngvi's kin = the Ynglings descended from Odin.
[5] The brother of Björn, who was one of Harald Fairhair's sons, is Hakon.
[6] Battle-oars = sword-blades; a fine simile.
[7] Hakon.
[8] We see from the last line of stanza 4 that Hakon wore a gold helmet. It is also said in the prose that he was conspicuous by it in the battle.
[9] Battle is often called play or game; cf. the synonyms for battle.
[10] Gram.
[11] Váfad = Odin; Odin's cloth = armour.
[12] The hard feet of the hilt = sword-blades.
[13] Weapons.
[14] Wound-drop = blood.
[15] Cape of swords = armour.

The sea of sword-points sounded
In the tempest of Odin;[1]
Many men did sink
In the stream of the sword.

Then sat the chiefs
With drawn swords,
With broken shields
And coats-of-mail cut.
The host that had to fight
For Valhalla
Was not in high spirits.

Then Göndul said,
Leaning on her spear-shaft:
"Now the following of the gods increases;
For the powers have
Bidden Hakon home
With a great host."

The king heard
What the Valkyrjas said.
The high ones on horseback
Bore themselves handsomely
And sat helmeted
With shields in front.

Hakon.

Why didst thou decide the battle
As thou didst yesterday, Skögul?
We surely deserved
Victory from the gods.

Skögul.

We have caused
Thee to keep the field
And thy foes to flee.

Now we shall ride,
Said the mighty Skögul,
To the good homes of the gods
To tell Odin
That the All-ruler is coming
To see him.

Hermód and Bragi,
Said Hroptatýr,[2]
Go you to meet the king
As one[3]
Who is thought a champion
Comes this way to the hall.

Thus spoke the king
As he came from the battle
All bespattered with blood:
Odin to us
Sullen seems
If we can read his mind.

(*Bragi.*)

Thou shalt have peace
With all *Einherjar*
And get cheer from the Asar;
Fighter of jarls,
Thou hast here within
Eight brothers,[4] said Bragi.
Our war-dress,
Said the good king,
Will we keep ourselves;
Helmet and coat-of-mail
Must be well cared for;
It is good to have them ready.

When it was known
That the king had
Respected well the temples,
All the powers and gods
Did Hakon
Welcome bid.

On a lucky day
Is the king born
Who has a mind like this;
His time
Will always
Be mentioned for good.

The Fenrir-wolf will be
Let loose
Upon the seat of men[5]
Before as good

[1] Tempest of Odin = battle, which can also be called the storm of any Valkyrja, and has many other names.

[2] Hropt or Hroptatýr = the shouting god = Odin.

[3] Hakon.

[4] Eight brothers, that is half-brothers, Harald Fairhair being the father of them all.

[5] By this is meant end of the world.

A king arises
In the empty land.

Cattle die,
Kinsmen die,
Land and ground are laid waste.
Since Hakon went
To the heathen gods
Many men are mournful.

The warriors who went to Valhalla were named *Einherjar*, and their food and drink are thus described :—

"Then said Gangleri: 'Thou sayest that all men who have fallen in battle since the beginning of the world have now come to Odin in Valhalla: what has he to give them to eat? It seems to me that there must now be a great multitude.' Hár replied, 'Thou sayest true that there are very great hosts of men there; but there will be many more, nevertheless they will be thought too few, when the wolf comes; but there are never such hosts in Valhalla that there is not more than enough of the flesh of the boar called Sæhrimnir. He is boiled every day, and every night he is whole again. As to this question which thou now askest, I think few are wise enough to be able to tell the truth about it'" (Later Edda).

"Then Gangleri said: 'What have the Einherjar[1] to drink which may last as long as the food? Is water drunk there?' Hár answered: 'Strangely dost thou ask; as if Allfödr (Allfather = Odin) would invite to him kings or jarls or other powerful men and give them water to drink; and, by my troth, many of the comers to Valhalla would think the drink of water dearly bought if no better cheer were to be had there, and they have before suffered pains and wounds unto death. I can tell thee another thing. The goat Heidrún stands on the roof of Valhalla, and bites buds off the branches of a very famous tree, Lerad, and from her teats flows a mead which fills a large vessel every day; the vessel is so large that all the Einherjar may get quite drunk out of it.' Gangleri said: 'That is an exceedingly useful goat for them; the tree on which she feeds must be very good.' Hár said: 'Still more remarkable is the stag Eikthyrnir which stands on Valhalla and feeds on the branches of this tree. From his horns there falls such a large drop that it comes down into Hvergelmir, and thence fall the rivers named, Sid, Vid, Sekin, Ekin, Svöl, Gunnthró, Fjörm, Fimbulthul, Gipul, Göpul, Gömul, Geirvimul, which run through the Asa-land'" (Later Edda, Gylfaginning, c. 39).

[1] Einherjar is plural, and is a compound. Ein = only, single; and herjar, from the verb herja = make warfare. Thus it means the only fighters, the only champions, being the warriors chosen by Odin to dwell in Valhalla with him, while Freyja lodged one-half of the slain.

The warriors in Valhalla appear to have divided their time between drinking and fighting.

Odin.	*Vafthrudnir.*
Tell me, . . .	All the *Einherjar*
Where men in the grass-plot	In the grass-plot of Odin
Fight every day?	Fight every day;
They slay whom they choose	They slay whom they choose
And ride from the fight	And ride from the fight
And sit together well agreeing.	And sit together well agreeing.

(Vafthrudnismal.)

In Grimnismál we are told that the cook in Valhalla was called Andhrimnir, and the cauldron Eldhrimnir:—

Andhrimnir does	The best of pork,
Cook Sæhrimnir	But few know
In Eldhrimnir;	By what the Einherjar live.

"Then Gangleri said: 'A great many men are there in Valhalla; surely Odin is a very great chief, as he rules over such a host. What is the entertainment of the Einherjar when they are not drinking?' Hár answered: 'Every day after having dressed they put on their war clothes, and go out into the enclosure and fight and slay each other. This is their game; near day-meal[1] they ride home to Valhalla and sit down to drink[2]'" (Later Edda, c. 40).

Odin did not eat, for wine was to him both food and drink.

"Then said Gangleri: 'Has Odin the same fare as the Einherjar?' Hár: 'The food which stands on his board he gives to his two wolves, Geri and Freki;[3] he needs no food, for wine is both drink and food to him.

"King Eirek (blood-axe of Northumberland), son of Harald Fairhair, one summer made warfare west of Scotland, and in Ireland, and in Bretland (Wales), and did not stop before he came south to England, and ravaged there as in other places, because King Adalstein (Ethelstan) was then dead, and his son Jatmund ruled England" (Fagrskinna, c. 27).

"Eirik had a host so large that five kings followed him. As he was a man of great bravery and a victorious man he

[1] Chief meal, corresponding in time to breakfast.

[2] Cf. also Vafthrudnismal, 41.

[3] Cf. also Grimnismál, 19:—

"Geri and Freki
Does the battle-tamer feed,
The famous Herjafödr (father of hosts of Odin);
But by wine only
The weapon-famous
Odin always lives."

trusted so well himself and his host that he went far inland with warfare. Then King Olaf, King Jatmund's tax-king,[1] came against him; they fought, and Eirik was overpowered by the land-host, and fell there with all his men. Arnkel and Erlend, the sons of Torfeinar (jarl in the Orkneys), fell there with him (Fagrskinna, c. 28).

After the death of Eirik, Gunnhild (his wife) caused a poem to be made on him, how Odin welcomed him, which gives us an idea of the belief of people about the Valhalla.

What dreams are those?
Methought a little before day
That I made Valhöll ready
For slain people;
I bid the valkyrjas carry wine,
As a king (visi) was coming;
I expect
From the earth
Some famous warriors;
Therefore is my heart glad.

What is thundering, Bragi,
As if a thousand were moving,
Or a multitude of men?
The wainscot walls do creak (Bragi answers)
As if Baldr were coming
Back to the halls of Odin.

Foolish talk (said Odin)
Sayest thou, wise Bragi,
Though thou well knowest all things
It is thundering for Eirik
Who will come here
The chief into the halls of Odin.

Sigmund and Sinfjotli!
Rise quickly
And go meet the chief;
Bid him come in
If it be Eirik,
For him I now expect.

I awakened the Einherjar;
I bid them rise
To spread the benches with straw,
To wash the beer-vessels,
Why expectest thou Eirik (Sigmund said)
More than other kings? (konung)
In many a land (said Odin)
Has he reddened the sword (mœkir)
And carried the bloody blade.

Why didst thou then deprive him of victory
As thou thoughtest he was brave?
Because it is uncertain
When the grey wolf looks
To the seat of the gods.

Hail now, Eirik (said Sigmund),
Thou shalt be welcome here;
Enter the hall, wise man;
I would ask
Who follows thee
Of kings (jöfr) from the thunder of edges (battle)?

There are five (said Eirik).
I shall tell the names of all.
I am myself the sixth.

[1] Some under-king, or host-kings, probably from Norway.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SUPERSTITIONS.—SHAPE-CHANGING.

Popular belief in the power of shape-changing—Journeys taken under assumed shapes—The language of birds—Use of animal food to incite to bravery—The drink of oblivion.

We have many instances in the Sagas showing that there was a popular belief in the power of some persons to change their shape[1] (*hamhleypa*), either by their own will or by the power of witchcraft. No matter into what animal shape an individual had been changed, no spell could ever touch the human eye, which remained unchangeable.

Men often undertook journeys under an assumed shape, in which case their own body was supposed to lie as dead, in a magical sleep; and a spirit was considered most fit for a journey when it was in animal shape: the name of the person who was on the journey was never to be mentioned, and it was considered most important that a sleeper should not be aroused, for if disturbed the whole enchantment was destroyed.

Women who undertook journeys in such animal shapes were called *hamhleypa*, or runners under another shape.

"It is said that Ulf, a hersir,[2] every night became so cross that no one could speak to him, and that in the evening the *sleeping sickness* came over him, so that he fell asleep. But there were those who said that he could change his shape and roam about far away as a wild beast, and that it was only his body which sat sleeping in the house; therefore his name was lengthened, and he was called *Kveldulf* (Evening Ulf)" (Egil's Saga, ch. 1).

"It is mentioned that once when Signy was sitting in her *skemma*[3] there came to her a Völva very skilled in witch-

[1] The belief in men having the power to change their shape is common in Africa to this day. See Ashangoland.

[2] See hereditary dignity, p. 491.

[3] See a house or room. Vol. II., p. 259.

craft. Signy spoke to her: 'I want to exchange shapes with you.' She said, 'Thou shalt have thy will;' so she caused by her witchcraft that they exchanged appearance; the sorceress sat down on the bed of Signy, as she told her, and went to bed with the king in the evening, and he did not know that Signy was not with him. Of Signy it is said that she went to the earth-house of her brother Sigmund, and asked him to lodge her during the night, as she had gone astray in the forest, and did not know where she was. He said she could stay there, and he would not refuse a lonely woman lodgings, and thought she would not reward him for the good entertainment by telling where he was. She went into his room, and they sat down to eat; he often looked at her, and she seemed fair and fine to him. . . . Thereupon she went home, met the sorceress, and asked to exchange shapes again, and thus she did. When time passed on Signy gave birth to a boy, who was called Sinfjötli. When he grew up he was large and strong and good-looking, and resembled much the Volsunga family; he was not quite ten winters old when she sent him to Sigmund in the underground house. She had tried her other sons before she sent them to Sigmund by sewing gloves to their hands through flesh and skin. They did not bear it well, and grumbled at it. She did the same to Sinfjötli, and he did not wince; she tore the kirtle off him so that his skin followed the sleeves;[1] she said he must feel pain. He answered, 'Little will a Volsung feel this pain.' Then he came to Sigmund, who asked him to knead their meal while he fetched firewood. He handed him a bag, and then went after wood. When he returned, Sinfjötli had baked the bread. Sigmund asked if he had found anything in the meal. He replied, 'I fancy there was something alive in the meal when I began to knead it, but I have kneaded it also herein.' Sigmund said, laughing: 'I guess thou wilt not eat this bread to-night, for thou hast kneaded in it the most poisonous worm.' Sigmund was so strong that he could eat poison without being hurt; and Sinfjötli could stand poison externally,[2] but was unable to eat or drink it"[3] (Volsunga Saga, c. 7).

"King Hring, of Uppdalir, in Norway, had a son, Björn (bear), and when his wife died he married a woman from Finnmörk. She changed her stepson into a bear in this way. She struck him with a wolfskin glove, and said that he should become a fierce and cruel lair-bear, 'and use no other food than

[1] Meaning that the skin was torn.

[2] Meaning that the skin could be touched with it.

[3] There were two kinds of poison used. Cf. also Volsunga, c. 5.

the cattle of thy father; thou shalt kill it for thy food, so much of it that it will be unexampled, and never shalt thou get out of this spell, and this revenge shall harm thee.'

"Thereafter Björn disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him. When he was missed he was searched for, and nowhere found, as was likely. Then it is told that the king's cattle were killed in large numbers, as a big and fierce grey bear began to attack them. One evening the bondi's daughter (Björn's sweetheart) happened to see this fierce bear, which came to her and fondled her much. She thought she recognized in this bear the eyes of Björn, Hring's son, and did not shun him much. The bear walked away, and she followed until it came to a cave. When she came there a man greeted Bera,[1] the bondi's daughter. She recognized Björn, and they were very glad to see each other. They stayed in the cave for a while, for she would not part before she need. He said it was unfit for her to stay there with him, as he was a beast by day and a man by night. King Hring came home from his warfare, and was told what had occurred while he was away, that his son Björn had disappeared, and a large beast had come into the country and attacked his own cattle mostly. The queen urged much to have the beast slain, but it was delayed a while; the king disliked this, and thought it strange. One night, when Bera and Björn were in their bed, Björn said, 'I expect that to-morrow is my death-day, and that I shall be hunted up, and I take no pleasure in life because of the ill fate that lies on me, though I have one enjoyment, namely, that we are two, which will now be changed. I will give thee the ring which is under my left arm; to-morrow thou wilt see men who attack me, and when I am dead go to the king and ask him to give thee what is under the left shoulder of the bear, which he will grant. The queen will suspect thee when thou goest away, and give thee the flesh of the animal to eat, but thou shouldst not eat it, for thou art pregnant, as thou knowest, and wilt bear three boys, who are ours, and on them will it be seen if thou eatest of the bear's flesh, and this queen is the greatest witch. Then go home to thy father, and there bring up the boys; one of them will seem the worst to thee, and, if thou art not able to have them at home for the sake of their overbearing and unruliness, then take them away with thee to this cave. Thou wilt find here a chest with three compartments; the runes by its side will tell what is to belong to each of them; three weapons are in the rock, and each of them shall have the one intended for him. The first-born of

[1] The woman's name means she-bear.

our sons shall be called Thórir, the second Elgfrodi, the third Bödvar, and I think it probable that they will not be little men, and their names will long be remembered.' He foretold her many things, and then the bear's skin fell over him. The bear went out, and she after him, and looked round. She saw many men coming past the spur of the mountain, with many large dogs in front. The bear ran out of the cave and along the mountain; the dogs and the king's men came against it, and it was difficult to hunt it; it maimed many men before it was slain, and killed all the dogs. At last they made a circle round it, and it ran in the circle, and saw that it could not escape; it turned to the king's side, caught the man next to him, and tore him asunder alive; then it was so exhausted that it threw itself down on the ground; they soon rushed at it and slew it. The bondi's daughter saw this, went to the king, and said: 'Will you, lord, give me what is under the left shoulder of the bear?' The king consented, as it could only be a thing well fit to be given to her. The king's men had then flayed off much of the skin of the bear; she went and took the ring, and kept it, but they saw not what she took, and did not search; the king asked who she was, as he did not know her; she gave him a wrong name"[1] (Hrolf Kraki, cc. 25, 26).

Some women could shape themselves into a *Mara* or *Kveldrida* (evening-rider, or nightmare), in which shape they could hurt or kill people in their sleep. In the Eidsifja Kristinrett we find that there was a punishment for women who had this power.

"Geirrid and Gunnlaug conversed during the greater part of the day, and late in the evening she said to him: 'I should like thee not to go home to-night, for many are the *sea-sliders* (those who slide over the sea—witches, spirits, etc.), and there are often witches beneath a fair skin, and thou dost not look very lucky in my eyes now.' He answered: 'I shall not be hurt, as we are two together.' She said: 'Odd will be of no use to thee, and thy self-will is worse for thyself.' Then Gunnlaug and Odd left, and went to Holt. Katla was already in her bed, and asked Odd to invite Gunnlaug to stay; he said he had done so, but he wanted to go home. 'Then let him go, and meet what he deserves,' she answered. Gunnlaug did not come home in the evening, and they talked about searching

[1] In ch. 27 we are told that Bera ate one bit and a little of another bit of the bear's flesh, and bore three sons

for him, but did not. In the night, when Thorbjörn looked out, he found his son Gunnlaug at the door; he was lying there, and was mad. He was carried in and his clothes pulled off. He was bruised and bloody all over his shoulders, and his flesh torn off the bones. He lay all the winter in wounds, and his sickness was much talked of. Odd Kötluson said that Geirrid had ridden on him, as they had parted abruptly that night; and most people thought it to be so. The next spring, during the citation days, Thorbjörn rode to Máfahlíd and summoned Geirrid, charging her with being an *evening-rider* and causing the sickness of Gunnlaug. The case came to the Thorsnesthing, and Snorri godi helped his brother-in-law, Thorbjörn, while Arnkel *godi* defended the case for his sister, Geirrid. The verdict of twelve (*tylftarkvid*)[1] had to decide; but neither Snorri nor Arnkel were allowed to deliver the verdict, on account of their relation to prosecutor and defendant. Then Helgi Hofgardagodi, the father of Björn, whose son Gest was the father of Skald-Ref, was called upon to deliver the verdict of the twelve. Arnkel *godi* went to the Court and took an oath at the altar-ring that Geirrid had not caused the sickness of Gunnlaug. Thórarin (a son of Geirrid) and ten others took oath with him, and then Helgi gave verdict for her (Geirrid), and the suit of Snorri and Thorbjörn was made void, and this brought dishonour on them" (Eyrbyggja, c. 16).

It was believed that some people understood the language of birds.[2]

"Dag, the son of King Dyggvi, took the kingship after him; he was so wise that he could understand the talk of birds. He had a sparrow which told him many tidings; it flew into various lands. The sparrow once flew into Reidgota-land, to a farm called Vörvi; it went on the field of the owner and took food. The owner came there, took up a stone, and wounded the sparrow to death. King Dag became sorry when the sparrow did not return; he then made a sacrifice to inquire, and got the answer that his sparrow had been killed at Vörvi. Then he levied a great host and went to Gotland, and made warfare and plundered. One evening when he went down to his ships with his host a thrall ran out of a forest and threw a pitchfork at them, which hit the king and killed him. His men went back to Sweden" (Ynglinga Saga, ch. 21).[3]

[1] See p. 558.

[2] From some stone tracings and many jewels we see the proof of this. Numerous instances are given in the Earlier Edda of birds speaking to persons.

[3] Cf. also Volsunga, 19.

"One summer when King Olaf's men had been gathering land-taxes he asked where they were best treated. They said by an old bondi who knew many things before they happened, and who had answered many of their questions, and they thought he understood the voice of birds." . . . . The king took this bondi on board his ship to show the way along the coast.

"As they were rowing a crow flew over the ship with loud shrieks. The bondi looked at it. The King said: 'Does it mean anything to thee?' 'It does, lord,' answered he. Another crow flew over the ship, shrieking. The bondi forgot to row, and his oar got loose in his hand. The king said: 'Thou art very attentive to the crow, or to what it says, bondi.' He answered: 'I have some misgivings, lord.' A crow passed over the ship a third time, shrieking louder than the two others, and flying nearer the ship. The bondi rose and stopped rowing. The king said: 'This signifies much to thee, or what does it tell?' The bondi answered: 'That which it is unlikely that I or it knows.' The king said: 'Tell me.' The bondi sang:—

The one winter old crow tells,
It knows not;
The two winters old one tells,
I believe it not;
But the three winters old one tells,
Which I think not likely,
That I row
On a mare's head,
And that thou, king,
Art the thief of my property.

(Olaf the Quiet's Saga (Heimskr.), c. 10.)

Not only was it believed that the form could be changed, but it was further believed that by eating some peculiar kind of food the temper of men could be changed. The meat and blood of strong and fierce beasts, especially of wolves, were held potent to make men brave and fierce, and thus partake of the nature of animals.

"Thereafter Regin came to Sigurd, and said: 'Hail, my lord; a great victory hast thou won, as thou hast slain Fafnir, and no one was so bold before as to dare to sit in his way, and this deed of fame will be remembered while the world stands. Regin stood looking on the ground for a long while, and then suddenly said, with great anger: Thou hast slain my brother, and scarcely can I be innocent of this deed.' Sigurd took his sword *Gram* and wiped it on the grass, and said to Regin: 'Thou wast far off when I did this deed, and tried this sharp sword with my hand and my strength. I had to fight the power of the serpent, when thou didst lay in a

heather cluster, and didst not know heaven from earth.' Regin answered: 'This serpent might have lain long time in his lair if thou hadst not used the sword which I made for thee with my hand, and then thou hadst not done this alone.' Sigurd said: 'When men come to fight, it is better to have a good heart than a sharp sword.' Then Regin said to him very sadly: 'Thou didst slay my brother, and scarcely can I be innocent of this deed.'

"Then Sigurd cut out the serpent's heart with a sword called *Ridil*. Regin drank the blood of Fafnir, and said: 'Do one thing for me which is easy to thee; go to a fire with the heart and roast it, and give it me to eat.' Sigurd went away and roasted it on a spit, and when the blood came out of it, he touched it with his finger to see if it were roasted; he put his finger in his mouth, and when the serpent's heart-blood touched his tongue he understood the speech of birds; he heard nut-hatches (*Sitta Europæa*) chirp in the brushwood near him—'There thou sittest, Sigurd, roasting the heart of Fafnir; he (Sigurd) should eat it himself, then he would become wiser than any other man.' Another said: 'There lies Regin, wishing to betray the one who trusts him.' The third one said: 'Let him (Sigurd) cut off his head, then he can rule alone over the great gold.' The fourth one said: 'He would be wiser if he acted according to our advice, and rode to the lair of Fafnir, and took the great gold which is there, and then rode up to Hindarfjall (Hind-fell), where Brynhild sleeps, where he will learn great wisdom; he would be wise if he took your advice, and thought of what he ought to do (namely, to slay Regin); where I see the ears I expect the wolf.' The fifth said: 'He (Sigurd) is not so wise as I think if he spares him (Regin), having slain his brother.' The sixth said: 'It would be a bold deed if he slew him, and ruled alone over the gold.' Then Sigurd said: 'It is not my fate that Regin is my slayer, but both the brothers ought rather to go the same way.' He drew the sword *Gram* and cut off Regin's head. After this he ate part of the serpent's heart, and kept part of it. Then he jumped on his horse and rode on Fafnir's track to his room, and found it open; all the doors were of iron, and also the door-fittings, and all the beams, and it was dug into the ground. Sigurd found there very much gold, and the sword *Hrotti*, and there he took the helmet of terror, and the golden coat-of-mail, and many costly things. He found there so much gold that he thought likely that two or three horses would not carry more. He put it all in two chests, and took the bridle of the horse Grani, which would not walk, and it was no use to whip it. He found what the horse wished,

jumped on its back and spurred it, and it ran as if it had no burden on its back" (Volsunga Saga, c. 19).

"When it drew near to Yule, people became uncheerful, Bödvar asked Hött why this was. He told him a large and terrible animal had come there for two winters; it had wings on its back, and always flew: for two autumns it had come, and done much damage; weapons did not wound it, and the best champions of the King did not come home. Bödvar said: 'The hall is not so well manned[1] as I thought, if one creature is to lay waste the realm and property of the king.' Hött replied that it was not an animal, but the worst fiend. On Yule-eve the King said: 'I want people to be quiet and silent this night, and I forbid all my men to endanger themselves against the animal; with the property let it happen as it may, but I do not want to lose my men.' Every man promised to do as he ordered. Bödvar stole away in the night with Hött, who went unwillingly, saying that he was taken to death, while Bödvar said it would not be so. As they left the hall, Bödvar was obliged to carry him, he was so frightened. When they saw the beast, Hött shouted as loud as he could, and cried that it was going to swallow him. Bödvar told the animal to be silent, and flung him down in the moss; there he lay, not without fear, nor dared he go home. Bödvar now went against the beast; it happened that his sword was fast in the scabbard; at last he got the scabbard turned, so that the sword came out; he thrust at once under its shoulder so strongly that he pierced the heart, and it fell dead. Then he went to where Hött lay; he took him, and carried him to the place where the beast lay dead. Hött trembled violently. Bödvar said: 'Now thou shalt drink its blood.' He was long unwilling, but dared not, however, disobey. Bödvar made him swallow two large mouthfuls, and eat some of the beast's heart; then took hold of him, and they wrestled a long while. Bödvar said: 'Thou hast become rather strong, and I do not think thou art now afraid of the hirdmen of King Hrolf.' Hött replied: 'I will not be afraid of them nor of thee hereafter.' Bödvar answered: 'That is good, my companion Hött; let us go and lift up the beast, and arrange it so that others will think it alive.' This they did. After this they went home quietly, and no one knew what they had done" (Hrolf Kraki's Saga, c. 35).[2]

There were several different drinks, known under different

[1] Same expression as of a ship.

[2] Cf. also about Hrolf's Champions, c. 31. (Ynglinga, c. 38.)

names, prepared in a special manner and with incantations, which were supposed to possess special properties. For these magical drinks, which were believed to have great power, many things were mixed, and runes were used, partly as formularies over the drink, or carved on trees or bones which were thrown into it[1]; in the latter case this was done to excite love for the one in whose behalf the potion was given. Chief among these drinks was the drink of oblivion (*Uminnisveig*), a drink prepared to remove sorrow from the mind.

Gudrun went from Denmark home to her mother Grimhild who gave her the drink of oblivion.

Grimhild brought to me
A cup to drink,
A cold and bitter one;
I forgot my sorrows;
It was mixed
With the might of the earth,
With ice-cold sea-water,
With sacrificed blood.
In the horn were
All kinds of letters
Carved and painted in red;
I could not read them;
A long ling-fish,
The unreaped corn-ear,
The bowels of beasts.
Many evils
Were mixed in that beer;
The herbs of every forest,
Burnt acorns,
The soot of the hearth,
Sacrificed bowels,
A boiled swine-liver,
For it soothes the sorrows.
(Volsunga, c. 32.)

After taking this drink of oblivion she forgot all her sorrows, and married King Atli, who afterwards murdered her brother at a feast where they were invited by him. Gudrun revenged herself by killing the children she had by Atli, and then had him murdered.

[1] By magical drink, poisonous drink is often meant (Heimskr. Herald Fairhair, 41). See Gudrúnarkvida ii., stanzas 21, 22, 23, 24.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUPERSTITIONS.—WITCHCRAFT.

Two kinds of witchcraft—Use of runes with incantations—Power of witchcraft—Ceremonies attending it—The Finns great masters in the art—Magical characters on weapons—Witchcraft—Knowing women—Raising dead people—Power of the eye to blunt weapons—Charmed swords—The life-stone—Charmed garments—Ocular delusions—Appearance of ghosts at feasts considered lucky—Protection against ghosts—Punishment of witchcraft in later times.

THE worshippers of the Asa creed were strong believers in witchcraft; it is most difficult for us now to comprehend such superstition, but we need not go back to that remote period to find the same diseased state of mind in Europe and America.

Two kinds of witchcraft, *Galdr* and *Seid*, were practised. Galdr, derived from *gala*, to sing, was a form of sorcery; Odin was called the father of galdr, and those who practised it were called *galdrasmid*, or galdr-smiths, and sometimes galdramen, who, while singing their formularies, used at times to mark certain mystic runes[1] which were used with the incantation; and it appears that caution in the use of these runes was necessary, as their use by an impostor was held to cause danger.[2] It was supposed that such gald were able to cure wounds and sickness, allay fire and storm, rouse up the dead in order to consult them as to the future, and win the love of women.

"He (Odin) taught with runes and with songs called galdrar; therefore the Asar are called galdra-smiths. Odin knew and himself practised the greatest of idróttir, which is called seid; by it he could tell the destiny of men and

[1] Egil's Saga, 44.

[2] Egil's Saga, 75. See p. 165.

future things, and cause death or bad luck, or illness, and take away men's wit or strength, and give them to others. He taught most of his idróttir to the sacrificing priests; they were next to him in all wisdom and witchcraft. Many others, however, learned a great deal of them, and from them witchcraft has spread widely and been kept up long" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 7).

The seid, which had been learnt by the Asar from the Vanir, like the *galdr*, was performed with songs and incantations, and generally at night. It was used mostly for evil purposes, and its knowledge was not held as noble as that of galdr. It had been taught by Freyja, and was chiefly performed by women.

Among the ceremonies attending seid was that of cooking strange dishes, the objects composing which were kept secret by the seid persons.

"Kotkel had a large seid-platform made; they all went up on it and sung there their wisdom, namely, galdr" (Laxdæla, c. 35).

"Kotkel and Grima and their sons left their home during the night; they went to the farm of Hrút and there made a great seid. When the seid-sounds were heard, those inside could not understand what it was, but the song was fine to listen to. Hrút alone knew these sounds, and said that no man must look out that night, and that every one who was able must be awake, and they would not be harmed if they did this. Nevertheless all fell asleep. Hrút was awake the longest time, but nevertheless fell asleep. Kári, his son, was then twelve winters old and the most promising of his sons, and much loved by him; he could scarcely get any sleep, for all this was intended against him; he did not get much rest. He jumped up, looked out, and walked on the seid place, and fell down dead at once" (Laxdæla, c. 37).

The Finns were looked upon as great masters in witchcraft, and their advice was in much favour; they were considered especially clever in going on journeys in another shape.

"Vanlandi, the son of Svegdir, succeeded him and ruled the realm of Upsala; he was a great warrior, and travelled far and wide. He lived one winter in Finnland with Snjar the old, and married his daughter Drifa. In the spring he went away, and Drifa remained; he promised to come back in three winters, but for ten winters he did not come. Then Drifa sent for

the seid-woman, Huld, and sent Visbur, their son, to Sweden. Drifa made a bargain with the seid-woman, Huld, that she should get Vanlandi by seid to Finnland, or slay him. When the seid was performed Vanlandi was at Uppsalir; thereupon he wished to go to Finnland, but his friends and advisers prevented him from going, and said that his wish was owing to the witchcraft of the Finns" (Ynglinga, c. 16).

Mal was a name given to magical characters, runes, &c., which were inlaid upon weapons, and which were believed to enable their owners to hold others spell-bound.

"Thorgrim Nef dwelt at Nefstadir, near the Haukadal river. He was versed in witchcraft and magic, and a very great wizard. Thorgrim and Thorkel invited Thorgrim Nef to their home, for they had a feast. Thorgrim was skilled in iron work. The three went together to the smithy, and thereupon shut the door. The pieces of the sword Grásida (grey-side), which Thorkel got at the division of property between himself and his brother, were taken, and from these Thorgrim made a spear, which was finished at night. Ornaments (mal) were inlaid on it" (Gisli Sursson's Saga).

Witchcraft-knowing women were accustomed to rub with their hands the whole body of the man who was to go to war or fight; by this means they found the most vulnerable part of the body, for they believed that on this place they could find a knot which was supposed to be the spot that was to be wounded, and if they found such a knot they had a special protection made for it.

"Helga's foster-mother used to touch men (with her hands) before they went into a fight; she did this with Ögmund before he left, and said she did not find a vulnerable spot" (Kormak i.).

"It is told that Hrói gathered men and got 30 before he left; his foster-mother wanted to touch his body with her hands, before he went from home, and thought she knew then best how he would succeed. She found a vulnerable point on his foot, but in other places she was satisfied" (Vemunds Saga, c. 5).

The champion Thormód came very often to talk with the widow's daughter against Grima's will. Then she sent a man, Kolbak, to lie in ambush for Thormod one evening.

"She (Grima) touched him all over with her hands. Then Kolbak went his way. . . . Thormód walked in front of the sheep-house door, and at that moment a man with a drawn sax ran out of it and struck at Thormód. The blow hit Thormód's arm above the elbow and the wound was large. Thormód threw his shield down and drew his sword with his left hand and struck at Kolbak with both arms, the one blow after the other. The sword did not bite, for Kolbak was so strengthened with witchcraft that iron did not bite him. Kolbak did not strike any more blows at Thormód, but said: 'Now I can do with thee, Thormód, what I like, but I will not do more.' Kolbak went home and told Grima the news" (Fóstbrædra Saga, c. 14).

Among the numerous kinds of witchcraft practised was that of a man sitting out of doors at night in the open air, and, by some magical action not described, raising troll (wizard or witch) or dead people, in order to ask them questions as to the future.[1]

Hakon and Ingi were pretenders to the crown of Norway, and were going to fight a battle.

"It is told that Gunnhild, to whom Simon had been married, and who was the foster-mother of King Hakon, had out-sitting for the victory of Hakon. The result was that they should fight against Ingi at night, but never by day, and then it would go well. The woman who was said to have sat out is called Thórdis Seggia, but I do not know it for true" (Hakon Herdibreid's Saga, c. 16).

Some people were supposed to have power in their eyes, by which they could blunt swords in the fight.

"Gunnlaug Ormstunga challenged the viking Thórorm to a hólmganga, because he would not pay back money which he had borrowed from Gunnlaug. Gunnlaug was then at the hird of King Adalrad in London, who told him that this man blunted every weapon, and gave him a sword to fight with and told him to show only his own sword to the viking (Gunnlaug Ormstunga's Saga).

"She (Thordis the witch) blunted Kormak's sword so that it could not bite" (Kormak's Saga, c. 23).

Men who carried charmed weapons were always held to be

[1] Cf. Ynglinga, c. 7.

lucky in fight. When using such charmed swords, good care had to be taken that the charm should be effective, or part of the power was lost: for instance, the famous sword *Sköfnung* —taken from the mound of Hrólf Kraki—was not to be drawn in the sight of people, nor must the sun shine on the hilt,[1] and the wounds inflicted by these could not be cured except by touching them by the so-called *lifstein* (life-stone) which was attached to the sword. The wounds of the sword Sköfnung could only be healed by the stone set in its hilt.

"Bersi had a sharp sword, Hviting, with a lifstein attached to it, which he had carried in many dangers" (Kormak's Saga, c. 9.)

Bersi, on account of his many duels, was called Holmganga Bersi.

"Kormak said to him: 'I challenge thee, Bersi, to holmganga (a duel) at the end of half a month on Leidholm." . . . .

"Bersi had a sharp sword called Hviting, with a lifstein attached to it, which he had carried in many dangers.

"Dalla (mother of Kormak) advised him to find Midfjord Skeggi and ask for Sköfnung (Holf Kraki's sword). Kormak went to Reykjar (Skeggisbù) and told him his case. Skeggi answered that he was unwilling to lend him the sword, for they 'Sköfnung and Kormak' were unlike in temper. 'Sköfnung is slow, but thou art impatient and headstrong.' Kormak rode away ill pleased, returned to Mel, and told his mother that Skeggi would not lend him the sword. Skeggi used to give Dalla advices; and there was friendship between them. Dalla said: 'He will lend thee the sword, though he will not yield readily (at once).' Kormak did not think it was fair if he withheld not the sword from her, but did from him. . . . A few days later she told Kormak to go to Reykjar, as Skeggi would now lend him the sword; Kormak found him and asked for Sköfnung. 'The management of it may seem difficult to thee,' said Skeggi; 'a bag (covering) follows it (goes with it) and thou shall leave it quiet; the sun must not shine on the upper guard, nor shall thou draw it except thou preparest for fight; but, if thou comest to the fighting-place, sit alone, and there draw it. Hold up the blade and blow on it; then a small snake will creep from under the guard; incline the blade, and make it easy for it (the snake)

[1] Cfr. Laxdæla, 57, 58; Njala, 30.

to creep back under the guard.' Kormak said: 'Many things do you the wizards use?' Skeggi replied: 'This, however, will help thee fully.' After this, Kormak rode home and told his mother what had happened; and said that her will had much power over Skeggi; showed her the sword, and tried to draw it; but it would not leave the scabbard. Dolla said: 'Too self-willed art thou, kinsman.' Kormak put his feet on the guard, and tore off the bag; Sköfnung howled at this, but could not be drawn from the scabbard.

"The time for the holmgang approached, and Kormak left home with fifteen men. In the same manner Bersi rode to the place with as many men. Kormak came first, and said to Thorgils that he wanted to sit there alone. Kormak sat down and unfastened the sword, and did not take care that the sun did not shine on its guard; he had girt himself with it outside his clothes, and tried to draw it; but did not get it out until he stepped on the guard; the small snake came, but it was not handled as he should have been, and the luck of the sword was changed, and it went howling out of the scabbard" (Kormak's Saga, c. 9).

There were also garments which were supposed to be impenetrable.

When about to leave the house of his parents, Hrólf went to his mother Asa and said:

"I want thee, mother, to show me the cloaks which Vefreyja, thy foster-mother, made for my father a long time ago.' She opened a large chest and answered: 'Here thou canst see them, and they have decayed but little as yet.' Hrólf took them up; they were with sleeves, a hood at the top, and a covering for the face; they were wide and long; no iron could cut them, and poison could not damage them. Hrólf took two which were the largest, and said: 'I do not carry away too much from the house of my father, though I take the cloaks'" (Göngu Hrólf's Saga, c. 4).

Among the kinds of witchcraft mentioned in the sagas is one called *sjonhverfingar* (ocular delusion).

"At Froda there was a large hall and a locked bed adjoined it, as then was customary. On each side of the hall was a small room; one of them was filled with dried fish and the other with flour. Meal fires were made every night in the hall as was the custom. People used to sit long at the fires before they went to their meal. When the gravediggers came home that night,

and men were sitting at the fires at Froda, they saw a half moon appearing on the wall of the room. All those who were inside could see it. It moved backwards against the course of the sun through the room. It did not vanish while they sat at the fire. Thorod asked Thorir Wood-leg what this foreboded. Thorir answered it was the Urdarmani (moon of Urd). Deaths of men will follow upon this. This continued all the week; the urdarmani entered every night" (Eyrbyggja, c. 52).[1]

"Late in the summer Hörd went to Saurbœr with twenty-three men, for Thorstein Öxnabrodd (ox-staff) had boasted that his witchcraft-knowing foster-mother Skroppa could with her sorcery effect that the Hólmverjar (men of Hólm, the island) were not able to harm him. They came to the bœr; Skroppa and the daughters of the bondi Helga and Sigrid were at home, but Thorstein was at his sæter at Kuvallardal, in Svinadal. Skroppa opened all the rooms; she made sjonhverfingar, so that the three (women) sitting on the cross-bench seemed to them three boxes standing there. The men of Hörd talked about wanting to break these boxes. Hörd forbade that. They then left the farm and turned northward to see if they could find any cattle. They saw a young sow running with two pigs in that direction; they got ahead of it. Then it seemed to them that a large crowd of men was coming against them with spears and fully armed, and the sow with its pigs shook their ears. Geir (Hörd's foster-brother) said: 'Let us go to our boat; there will be odds against us.' Hörd said it was best not to run away so soon without any trial. At the same time he lifted up a large stone and struck the sow to death. When they came to it they saw Skroppa lying dead there, while the bondi's daughters, whom they had taken for pigs, stood at her side. When she was dead they at once saw that the crowd which came against them was oxen and not men; they drove the cattle down to the boat, killed them, and loaded their boat with the meat. Geir took Sigrid away against her will, and they went out to the Hólm (Hörd's Saga, 25).[2]

When drowned men came to their own *arvel*, or burial feast, as ghosts, it was looked upon as a good sign for the survivors of the family, for then the dead men had been well received by Ran.

The people were strong believers in ghosts, and thought that the spirit of the dead could come into the mound where the

[1] Cf. Landnama, pt. iii.
[2] Cf. also Eyrbyggja, c. 20; and Færeyinga, c. 40.

body was buried. When they were seen at night at their mounds they were surrounded by fire, and it was said that the gate of Hel, where the dead were supposed to be, was open. These ghosts of the dead were harmless.

The bondmaid of Sigrun, when walking one evening past the mound of Helgi, saw that he rode to it with many men; she sang:

Is it an illusion
Which I think I see,
Or the doom of the gods?[1]
Dead men ride;
You prick your horses
With spur points,
Or have the Hildings[2]
Got leave to go home?[3]

Helgi sang:

It is not an illusion
Which thou thinkest thou seest,
Nor the doom of the world,
Though thou seest us,
Though we our horses
Prick with spurs,
But the Hildings have got
Leave to go home.

The bondmaid went home and told Sigrun.

Go out, thou Sigrun
From Sefafjöll,
If thou wantest to
Meet with the leader of men.[4]
The mound has opened;
Helgi has come;
The prints of the sword bleed
The Dogling[5] asked thee
That thou the wound-dripping
Shouldst stop. [(blood)

Sigrun went into the mound to Helgi, and sang:

Now I am as glad
Of our meeting
As the greedy
Hawks of Odin[6]
When they know of slain men,
A warm prey,
Or dew-besprinkled,
See the dawn of day.
I will kiss
The dead king
Ere thou throwest off
The bloody brynja;
Thy hair, Helgi,
Is covered with hoar-frost;
The king is all wet
With the dew of the slain.
The hands of Hogni's son-in-law
Are cold from wet,
How shall I, king,
Better this for thee?
* * * *

Helgi and his men rode their way, and the maidens went home to their house. The next evening Sigrun let a bond-

[1] Ragnarök.
[2] Chiefs.
[3] From Odin.
[4] Helgi.
[5] Helgi.
[6] Hawks as birds of prey.

maid keep watch at the mound; and at sunset, when Sigrun came to the mound, the bondmaid sang:

Now would have come,
If to come he intended,
The son of Sigmund[1]
From Odin's halls;
I say that the hope
Of the king's coming lessens,
As on ashtree boughs[2]
Eagles sit,
And all men throng
To the meeting of dreams.[3]
Be not so mad
As to go alone,
Sister[4] of Skjöldungs,
To the houses of the ghosts.
Stronger, maiden, become at night
All dead fiends,[5]
Than in the light of day.
(Helgikvida Hundingsbani, ii.)

There were ghosts who were supposed to kill people; the best means of protection against them was to burn the body and throw the ashes into the sea, or to cut off the head and put it at or between the feet, as the body had then to walk on its own head. Another way of getting rid of them was to pursue them by law, and sentence them at the door of the house they haunted.[6]

Án had slain an outlaw, Garan, in a wood.

"Án left him dead; he cut off his head, dragged him out (of his house), and put his nose between his legs, that he should not appear after his death" (An's Bogsveigis Saga, c. 5).

"The overbearing of Klaufi became so great that he maimed both men and cattle. Karl thought it a great evil that his kinsman should be a ghost. He went to his mound and had him dug up. He was then still undecayed. He had a large fire made on the rock above the house of Klaufabrekka, and burned him to ashes. He had a case of lead made, and put the ashes in it. Two bars of iron were on it, and he sunk it into the hot spring south of Klaufabrekka. The stone on which Klaufi was burnt was rent in two parts, and Klaufi never did harm after this"[7] (Svarfdæla, 30).

"At this time Thórodd Thorbrandsson lived in Alptafjord. He owned both Úlfarsfell and Örlygsstadir, but then the haunting of Thórólf Bœgifót became so strong that people

[1] Helgi.
[2] We see it is so late that the eagles sit on the boughs for the night, &c. So they despair of Helgi's coming.
[3] One of the finest similes for sleep.
[4] Here *dis* may be sister or guardian-spirit. Skjöldungs = kings.
[5] The bondmaid calls Helgi and his men ghosts and fiends.
[6] See description in Eyrbyggia. Each ghost was called by its name, and had to leave by the opposite door.
[7] Cf. also Laxdæla, 24; Gretti, 34–37.

could not dwell on these farms. Bólstad was also empty of people, for Thórolf began to haunt there as soon as Arnkel (the bondi, Thórolf's son) was dead, and killed men and cattle. And no man has dared to settle there since because of this. When this farm was quite deserted, Bœgifót haunted Úlfarsfell, and caused great trouble there. All the people were struck with terror when they became aware of him. The bondi went to Kársstadir and complained of this to Thórod, for he was his tenant. He said it was the opinion of people that Bœgifót would not stop before he had devastated the whole fjord of men and cattle, and if no means were tried against this he would not be able to keep himself there any longer. When Thórod heard this, he thought it was not easy to deal with. Next morning he sent for his horse, and told his huskarls (servants) to go with him, and also had men from the next farms with him. They went to Bœgifótshöfdi (Cape of Bœgifót) to Thórolf's grave. He was then still not decayed, and very *tröll-like* to look at. He was blue like Hel, and stout like a bull. When going to move him, they could not lift him at all. Then Thórod had a felled tree pushed under him, and thus they lifted him out of the grave. Then they rolled him down on the beach, cut wood, made a large pile, set it on fire, rolled Thórolf on it, and burned the whole into cold ashes, though it lasted long before the fire could take in Thórolf's body. It was blowing a hard gale, and the ashes were blown far and wide while the burning lasted, and all the ashes they could they raked out on the sea. When they had finished this work, they went home and came there about bedtime" (Eyrbyggja, c. 63).

In later times the seid people were feared and punished, because they did evil. Harald Fairhair burnt one of his own sons because he had mixed himself up with this form of witchcraft.[1]

"If a woman is accused of using witchcraft, "galdr," and sorcery, six women shall be named on both sides of her who are known to be good housewives; they shall give evidence that she knows neither galdr nor sorcery. If they do not, she is an outlaw. The king gets one half of her property, and the bishop the other" (Gulath 28).

"Rögnvald Réttilbeini owned Hadaland; he learned witchcraft, and became a seid-man. King Harald disliked seid-

[1] Snorri Harald Fairhair's Saga, ch. 36.

men. In Hörðaland there was a seid-man called Vitgeir; Harald sent him word to leave off seid. He answered and sang:

It does little harm	When Rögnvald
Though we the children	Réttilbeini,
Of bœndr	The famous son of Harald,
Make seid	Makes seid in Hadaland.

When Harald heard this, he sent Eirik (Blood-axe) to Uplönd; he came to Hadaland and burnt his brother Rögnveld, together with eighty seid-men, in his house; this deed was much praised" (Harald Fairhair, c. 36).

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUPERSTITIONS.—OMENS.

Belief in omens—The sight of blood on food a foreboding of violent death—Blood dripping from weapons a sign of fierce conflict—Peculiar appearances of the moon—Ravens—Howling wolves—Stumbling when going to fight—The second song of Sigurd Fafnisbani—Supernatural beings—Visions.

THE people were strong believers in omens, to which they paid great attention, and which were supposed to be seen by persons when awake or in their dreams. Some omens repeated themselves before recurring events of the same kind.

If any one imagined that he saw blood on his food, or that his food disappeared, he expected a speedy and violent death ;[1] and it was a common belief that blood dripping from weapons, or their sounding loud when used, foreboded a fierce battle or conflict.[2]

"He (Hildiglúm) heard a crash so loud that he thought both earth and heaven shook from it. Then he looked into the west, and saw a ring with the colour of flame, and in it a man on a grey horse. He passed quickly; and had a burning firebrand in his hand. He rode so near him that he could easily see him. He was black as pitch. He sang this stanza with a loud voice:—

I ride on a
Rime-frost maned horse,
With dewy wet mane,
Causing evil;
Fire is in the ends of the brand.
Poison in the middle;
Thus is it with Flosi's plan
As if a stick were thrown,
Thus is it with Flosi's plan
As when a stick is thrown.

It seemed to him that he flung it eastward to the mountains, and that such fire rose from it that he did not see the mountains for it. It seemed to him the man rode eastward to the fire and disappeared there. Then he went in to his bed, and fell in a long swoon, but woke from it. He remem-

[1] Viga Styr, 102.

[2] Njala, 72, 79.

bered all that had passed before his eyes, and told it to his father, who asked him to tell it to Hjalti Skeggjason. He went to Hjalti and told him. 'Thou hast seen a *gandreid*,'[1] said Hjalti, 'and it always forebodes great tidings" (Njala, c. 125).

Before the burning of Njal the following omen, which proved true, appeared at his farm Bergthorshval:—

"Bergthóra (his wife) carried food to the table. Njal said: 'Strange does this look to me now; I think I look all over the room, and that both the gable-walls are off, and the table and the food all covered with blood.' All except Skarphédin were startled at this. He asked them not to grieve or look sorrowful so that people would talk of it" (Njala, c. 127).

"It happened when Gunnar and Kolskegg rode towards Rangá that blood fell on the halberd of Gunnar. Kolskegg asked why this was so. Gunnar answered that when this happened in other countries it was called blood-rain, and Olver bondi in Hising said that this usually foreboded great tidings" (Njala, c. 72).

Among these omens must be reckoned the so-called *Urdarmáni* (the moon of Urd), a peculiar kind of appearance of the moon which foreboded the death of many people.[2] There were also natural omens, good and bad. It was considered a good omen if a warrior saw a raven follow him when going to fight —the interpretation probably being that the raven followed a victor in order to eat the corpses of the enemy; it was also a good omen to see or meet two men conversing, or to hear a wolf howl. When a man who was slain by any kind of weapon fell on his face it was thought to be an omen that he would be revenged, and the vengeance would come down upon the man who stood just in front of him when he fell;[3] but to stumble when going to fight, or to hear the croaking of ravens, was considered a bad omen.

The second song of Sigurd Fafnisbani relates how Sigurd was going to make war on the sons of Hunding. As he sailed along the coast a man stood on a rock and asked him who they were. They answered, and when they asked who he was he said

[1] Gandreid = wolf ride, wizard or witches' ride.

[2] Eyrbyggja, 52, where the moon moves all round along the wall.

[3] Egil, 24.

he was called *Hnikar* (one of Odin's names), but they might call him the man of the rock, *Feng* or *Fjölnir* (Odin's names). He went on board and the storm ceased.

Sigurd sang:

Tell me, Hnikar,
As thou knowest both
The luck of gods and men,
Which are best
If one should fight
Omens at the swoop of swords.

Hnikar.

Many warnings are good
If men knew them
At the swoop of swords;
I think the following
Of the black raven
Is good for a *sword-tree.*[1]

A second (warning) is,
If thou hast walked out
And art ready on thy way,
And thou seest
Standing on the path
Two men anxious to praise thee.

A third is that
If thou hearest a wolf
Howl under ash-branches.
Good luck wilt thou get
Against *helmet-staffs*[1]
If thou seest the wolves ahead.

No man should fight
With his face against
The late shining
Sister of the moon;[2]

Those gain victory
Who are able to see
The feats of the sword-play,
Or can array in wedge-shape.[3]

It is a great danger
If thou stumblest
When thou rushest into fight;
Faithless *Disir*
Stand on either side of thee
And long to see thee wounded.

Combed and washed
Should every wise man be,
And well fed in the morning,
For it is uncertain
Where he may be at night;
It is bad to hurry ahead of one's luck.

"One morning a raven came to the lighthole at Brekka, and croaked loudly; then Hromund sang—

Outside I hear in the morning twilight
The dark blue swan[4] of the sweat of the wound-thorn[5] croak;
The prey wakes the wary-minded one;[6]
Thus of yore screamed
The hawk of Gunn[7] before
Chiefs were death-fated,
When the birds of Gaut[8] foretold the fray.

Thorbjorn.

The hail-sprinkled gull[9] of the wave of heaps of slain
Screams when it comes from the sea;

[1] A warrior.
[2] Sister of the moon = sun.
[3] The famous war custom.
[4] I.e., raven.
[5] Wound-thorn, sword; sweat of the sword, blood.
[6] The raven was looked upon as very wise and prophetic.
[7] I.e., a Valkyrja.
[8] The birds of Odin were the birds of prey, or perhaps his ravens Hugin and Munin coming to tell him the news.
[9] The hail-sprinkled gull, sprinkled with blood; hail—poetical expression used for arrows. The wave of the heap of slain—the blood of the slain making waves by its quantity. A gull is often used as meaning a bird of prey.

Its mind craves
The prey of the morning;
Thus of yore screamed
The bird of corpses
From the old tree
When the hawks wanted the mead
of kings.[1]

Hromund.

Tree of the shield,[2]
Death was not fated to me
To-day or yesterday;
I[3] make ready for the sound of Ilm.[4]
I care little though plays
The dyed wand of Hedin's cloth[5]
Against red shields;
To us life was marked before."

(Landnama, ii. c. 33.)

When there was to be an important event there were always some omens before it took place, in the shape of visions, or supernatural beings who sang songs which foretold the event. It foreboded a violent death if a man saw his *fylgja* bloody.

"Once Njal and Thórd (his servant) were outside the farm. A he-goat was in the habit of going about the grass-plot on the farm, and no one was allowed to drive it away. Thórd said, 'This is strange.' Njal asked, 'What dost thou see which seems strange?' He answered, 'It seems to me that the he-goat lies here in the hollow place, and is bloody all over.' Njal replied there was no he-goat there, nor anything else. 'What is it, then?' inquired Thórd. 'Thou must be a death-fated man, and hast seen thy *Fylgja*,' said Njal, 'and guard thyself well.' 'That will not help,' added Thórd, 'if death is fated to me'" (Njala, c. 41).

"It is said that King Gorm once invited to a Yule-feast his father-in-law Harald, who promised to come in the winter, and the messengers so reported.

"When the time for preparation came the Jarl chose such followers to the feast as he wanted. Knut went with him, but it is not said how many men he had. They arrived at the Limafjord, and as they were about to cross it they saw there an oak which appeared somewhat unusual. There were growing on it acorns, which were small and quite green, but under it lay others both ripe and large. At this they wondered much, and the Jarl thought it very strange that there should be green acorns at that time of the year, for there lay near the oak those which had grown during the summer. 'We will go

[1] The mead of kings (blood of warriors slain by the host of kings).

[2] Shield is called here the plain of the ring. The tree of the shield is the warrior.

[3] I make ready for the sound of Ilm—take my weapon for battle, as the sound of Ilmis = noise made by weapons.

[4] A Valkyrja.

[5] Hedin's cloth = armour. The dyed wand is the sword dripping with blood.

back,' said the Jarl, 'and proceed no farther.' He thereupon returned home, where he remained with his hird the next season. The King deemed it strange that the Jarl did not come, but thought something important had prevented him. All was quiet during the summer, and when winter came the King invited the Jarl to the Yule-feast, as in the previous year. The Jarl promised to go, as before, and when the time came departed with his followers, and journeyed until he came to the Limafjord. He had now come on board, and intended to cross the fjord. It is said that they had with them pregnant bitches. After they had got on board the Jarl thought he heard the whelps in the bellies of the bitches barking, while the mothers themselves were silent. This the Jarl and all regarded as the greatest wonder, and they therefore turned back, and stayed at home during that Yule. On the third winter the King again invited the Jarl, who promised to come; and when the time came he departed, and journeyed until he arrived at the Limafjord, resolving to remain there overnight. Then a sight presented itself which was thought very strange. They saw a wave rise within, and another without, the fjord, and the two advanced to meet each other. The waves were large and made a great noise when they met and fell together; then it seemed as if the sea became bloody. Then the Jarl said, 'This is a fearful portent, and we must turn back and not accept the invitation.' This they did, and the Jarl remained at home also that Yule. . . . .

"It was resolved that the King should send messengers to the Jarl to ascertain why he had not come. The Queen advised that they should first meet and talk to him, and thus see what the reason was. When the messengers told the Jarl of their errand, he quickly got ready and went to visit Gorm with a fine retinue. The King received his father-in-law well, and quickly went to speak with him. The King asked why he had not once come at his bidding, and thus shown disrespect to the King and his invitation. The Jarl replied that he had meant no disrespect, but had not once come to the feast, because other things had prevented him. He then told the wonders which they had seen, as mentioned before, and asked if he would like to know what he thought each wonder meant. To this the King assented. The Jarl then said: 'I will first take that one where we saw an oak with small green acorns, with the old and large ones underneath. That I think must foretell a change of belief which will come over these lands, which will flourish more, and the fine acorns foretell that; but the present belief is betokened by the old acorns on the ground, and they will rot and become mere dust;

this belief will also fall and be destroyed when the new one rises. The second wonder was when we heard the whelps bark in the bitches. That I think must foretell that young men will take the words from the mouths of the older, and become so reckless that they will have no less to say, though the older are oftener wiser in counsels. And I think that those of whom this will be true have not yet come into the world, for the whelps which barked while the mothers were silent were yet unborn.

"'The third, when we saw the waves, one from the outer part, and the other from the inner part of the fjord, meet midways and fall each on the other's neck, and the water become bloody from the disturbance therefrom forebodes, I think, that some enmity will arise between great men within the country, whence will come fights and much disturbance. It is very likely that some offshoot of this war will take place at the Limafjord, because it is there we have seen these wonders of which I have spoken.'

"King Gorm was satisfied with the words of the Jarl, and thought him wise; he gave him peace, and his anger departed. It is said that before they went into the speech-room the King had set men to slay the Jarl, if haughtiness and disrespect were the only reasons for his not coming to the feast when invited; but the King now thought he had good cause for not coming. They went away from the speech-room, and the Jarl remained with him for a while. They then separated in peace, and the Jarl received good gifts. He left with his followers, and had a good journey home.

"A short time after Klakkharald gave his foster-son and kinsman Knut all his realm, and Knut took the rule of Holtsetaland and all the realms of Harald Jarl.

"The Jarl made ready to leave, and began his journey southward to Valland. He there embraced Christianity, and never returned to Denmark" (Flateyjarbók, vol. i.).

CHAPTER XXXII.

SUPERSTITIONS.—DREAMS.

Faith placed in dreams—Revelations of the gods in dreams—Their interpretation an important gift—Absence of dreams considered a misfortune—Magical sleep.

THE faith of the Northmen in dreams[1] was almost as great as that which they placed in their gods; like the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and other earlier nations, they believed that by them they were informed of coming events. Instances frequently occur in the Sagas of men wishing to dream in order to know the future. Those dreams which were of greatest importance were believed to be influenced by the revelations of the gods to the sleeper. Odin in a dream showed King Eirik the Victorious how it would go in the battle against Styrbjörn.[2]

The place where any one dreamt was considered important, especially if the dream was in a new house; the interpretation of dreams consequently was considered an important gift, and men and women who could explain them were called *draum-spekingar* (dream-wise),[3] amongst whom the Queens Ingigerd and Thyri had great renown.

"Harald was a Jarl who ruled over Holtsetaland (Holstein); he was nicknamed *Klakkharald*. He was a wise man, and had a daughter Thyri, who was the wisest of women, and interpreted dreams better than others. She was also handsome. The Jarl looked to her for the rule of the land, consulted her in everything, and loved her much. When Gorm had grown up and had taken the kingship, he left, and intended to ask

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[1] In Helgakvida Hundingsbana, sleep is called *draum-thing* (dream-meeting).

[2] Halfdan dreamt of the greatness of his family, Halfdan the Black, c. 7. Sometimes there were different explanations of the same dream (Vatnsdæla, 42).

[3] Laxdæla, 33; Atlamál, 14–25.

for the hand of Harald Jarl's daughter, or else attack him. When Harald Jarl and his daughter heard of King Gorm's journey and of his intentions, they sent messengers to invite him to a grand feast. This he accepted, and sat with them at the feast in good friendship and honour. Then he announced his errand to the Jarl, who said that his daughter should decide for herself, as she was much wiser than he. His suit was brought before her, and she said: 'It shall not be decided forthwith, and thou shalt return with good and honourable gifts. If thou thinkest much of me, thou shalt, when thou comest home, quickly cause to be built a house large enough for sleeping in. It must stand where no house has stood before. Therein shalt thou sleep the first night of the winter, and three nights together; and remember if thou dreamest anything. And thou shalt send men to tell me of thy dreams, if thou hast any, and I will then say whether I will marry thee or not. But do not send if thou dost not dream.' After this talk, King Gorm remained but a short time at the feast, and made ready to go home, as he was anxious to try her wisdom. He left with much honour and suitable gifts. When he returned home, he did in all things as she had told him: had the house built, and went into it as directed. He left three hundred fully-armed men near the house, and bade them watch and guard, as he thought there might be some treachery connected with it. He lay down on the bed which had been made in the house, and fell asleep and dreamt; and there he slept three nights, and then sent men and writings to Holtsetaland to the Jarl.

"The messengers arrived and told Harald Jarl and his daughter of King Gorm's dreams, and their errand to Thyri. When she had heard the dreams, she said: 'You may stay here as long as you like, but you shall tell your king that I will marry him.' They returned and told the king, who was very glad.

"He made his journey to Holtsetaland with many and well-dressed men. Harald Jarl heard of it, and had a splendid feast and grand entertainment prepared for him; and now they were married and loved each other well. At the feast Gorm entertained them by telling his dreams. 'I dreamt the first night, and all the three nights which I slept in the house, that I was outside and overlooked my whole realm. I saw the sea recede from the land so that all islands, sounds, and fjords were dry. After that I saw that three oxen went out of the sea upon the land where I was, and bit off all the grass closely where they walked, and then went away.

"'The second dream was very like the first, for it seemed

as if three oxen again came up from the sea; all were red, with large horns; they bit off the grass as closely as the previous ones, after which they returned.

"'In the third dream, which was like the others, I saw three oxen come up again; they were all black, and much larger horned than the others; after a while they returned to the water. After that I heard such a terrible crash that I thought it must be heard all over Denmark, and I saw that it was caused by the sea returning toward the shore. Now,' he said, 'I want thee, queen, to interpret the dream for the entertainment of those present, and thus show thy wisdom.' She consented, and interpreted the dream as follows: 'When three white oxen went up out of the sea on the land, that must mean three severe winters, when so much snow will fall that the season will be bad. When thou sawest three other red oxen, that means there will come three snowless winters, but yet not good ones, for they bite the grass off the ground. The three black oxen signify that there will come three winters, which will be so bad that none have ever seen the like, and such a black and bad season and famine will come over the land that it will be unexampled. That thou sawest them with large horns means there will be many outcasts who will lose all their property; that they went again into the sea means that the bad season will leave the land like they did; and that thou heardest a loud crash when the sea again came back on the shore means the war of powerful men, who shall meet here in Denmark, and have fights and great battles. It seems to me likely that some of the men in some of the wars will be near kinsmen to thee. If thou hadst first dreamt those things that were last, then these wars would have taken place in thy time, but now this will do no harm; and I would then not have gone with thee if thou hadst dreamt as I have before said. I can hinder all these dreams about the famine from being fulfilled.' After this feast King Gorm and Queen Thyri went home to Denmark, and had many ships loaded with corn and other food, and transported this to Denmark; the same was kept up every year until the arrival of those severe years which she had foretold. When the hard time came they wanted for nothing on account of their preparations, and there was no want in Denmark, for they distributed much grain among the people. Thyri was thought to be the wisest woman that had ever been in Denmark, and was called Thyri Danmarkarbót (Denmark's helper, saver)" (Flateyjarbók, vol. i.).

People were often forewarned of death in their dreams:—

"One night when King Ivar slept in the *lypting*[1] (upper deck) on his dragon-ship, it seemed to him that a great dragon flew out of the sea. Its colour was golden, and it glowed in the air as if sparks were flying from the hearth of a forge, and shone over all the lands nearest it. Behind it flew all the birds that he knew of in the northern lands. He saw a great cloud rising in the north-east, followed by such a rain-storm that it seemed to him all the forests and the whole land were floating in the water which had fallen: this was accompanied by thunder and lightning. When the large dragon flew towards the land, he met the rain-storm, and such a darkness arose that he could see neither the dragon nor the birds, but only heard the loud sound of the thunder and the tempest. This passed south and west over the land, and all over his realm. Then it seemed to him all his ships had been changed into whales, and swam out to sea. At this he awoke and called his foster-father, Hörd, told him his dream, and asked him to interpret it. Hörd said he was so old he could not understand dreams. He stood on a rock near to one end of the gangway, but the king lay in the *lypting*, and was unfastening the lower border of the tent as they talked. The king was in a bad humour, and bade Hörd go down on the ship and interpret his dream. Hörd answered that he would not, and said, 'I need not interpret thy dream; thou must know thyself what it means. It is likely it will not be long before others rule Sweden and Denmark. Now a greediness foreboding death has come upon thee, as thou wantest to conquer for thyself every realm, and dost not know that on the contrary thou wilt die and thy foes take thy realm.' The king said, 'Come here and tell thy evil prophecies.' Hörd said, 'I shall stand here and tell them.' The king said, 'To whom of the Asar was Halfdan the Valiant like?' Hörd answered, 'He was as Baldr was with the Asar, over whom all the gods wept, and not like thee.' The king said, 'That is good. Come here and tell it.' Hörd answered, 'I will stand here and tell.' The king replied: 'To whom of the Asar was Hrærek like?' 'To Hænir, who was the greatest coward of the Asar, though he was less cowardly than thou art.' The king asked, 'To whom of the Asar was Helgi the Sharp like?' Hörd replied, 'He was as Hermód, who was very bold, and did harm to thee.' The king said, 'To whom of the Asar was Gudröd like?' Hörd: 'He was as Heimdal, who was the most foolish of all the Asar, and nevertheless a lesser fool than thou.' The king: 'To whom of the Asar am I like?' 'Thou resemblest the

[1] See Vol. II., p. 142.

worst of all serpents existing, the Midgardsorm.' The king answered in great anger: 'If thou tellest me I am death-doomed, I can tell thee thou shalt live no longer, for I know thee, thou great Thurs. Now come nearer, thou Midgardsorm, and let us try our strength.' The king rushed from the *lypting*, and was so angry that he jumped out under the lower edge of the tent. Hörd plunged into the sea from the rock, and the men on the watch on board the king's ship saw neither of them come up on the surface afterwards" (Sögubrot, c. 3).

"He (Gjúki) had three sons, Gunnar, Högni, and Guttorm. Gudrún, his daughter, was a most famous maiden. . . . Gjúki was married to Grímhild, the witchcraft-knowing. King Budli was more powerful than Gjúki, though both were powerful. Atli, the brother of Brynhild (Budli's daughter), was a cruel, large, swarthy man, but of an imposing look, and the greatest warrior. Grímhild was a woman of fierce mind. The Gjúkungs flourished much, mostly because of their children who surpassed most others. Once Gudrún told her maidens that she could not be merry. A woman asked her what was the reason. She answered: 'We did not get good luck in dreams, and the sadness of my heart thou didst ask about is caused by a dream.' The woman said: 'Tell me, and let it not sadden thee, for dreams often forbode the weather.' Gudrún said: 'This one does not. I dreamt that I saw a fine hawk on my hand; its feathers had a golden colour.' The woman said: 'Many have heard of your beauty, wisdom, and courtesy; the son of some king will ask thee in marriage.' Gudrún said: 'Nothing did I think better than the hawk, and I would rather have lost all my property than lose it.' The woman said: 'Thy husband will be a great man, and thou wilt love him much.' Gudrún said: 'It grieves me that I do not know who he is; let us go to Brynhild, she will know it.' They made ready with gold and great beauty, and went with their maidens till they came to Brynhild's hall, which was adorned with gold, and stood on a mountain. When they were seen, Brynhild was told that many women in gilded waggons[1] drove towards the burgh. She replied: 'That must be Gudrún, Gjúki's daughter; I dreamt of her this night; let us go out and meet her; handsomer women (than she) cannot visit us.' . . . Gudrún said: 'I dreamt that many of us walked together from the *skemma*[2] and saw a large hart which far surpassed other deer; its hair was of gold. We all wished to catch it, but I alone succeeded, and I loved it above all other things. Then thou didst shoot it at my knees, which was such a sorrow to

[1] See Vol. II., Frontispiece.

me that I could scarcely bear it. Then thou gavest a wolf's cub to me, which besprinkled me with the blood of my brothers.' Brynhild answered: 'I will explain what will happen. Sigurd, whom I chose for my husband, will come to you; Grímhild will give him a mixed mead which will cause heavy trials for all of us; thou wilt marry him and quickly lose him; thou wilt marry King Atli; thou wilt lose thy brothers and slay Atli.' Gudrún said: 'A sore sorrow is it to us to know such things.' They went away home to King Gjúki" (Volsunga, c. 25).

The following dream foreboded the death of Gisli, who fell after one of the most memorable defences recorded:—

"Gisli laid himself down and tried to sleep, while they (Aud and Gudrid) were awake; and a sleep came over him. He dreamt that two birds came to the house and fought by stealth; they were rather larger than cock ptarmigans, and screamed rather loudly; they were dyed all over in blood. He awoke after this. And (his wife) asked if he had dreamt anything: 'Thy sleep-journeys are not good now,' said she. He sang a song (describing what he had dreamt)" (Gisli Sursson's Saga, p. 95).

When the brothers Gunnar and Hogni were invited on a visit by King Atli, by whom they were afterwards slain, their wives dreamt bad dreams. Kostbera, Hogni's wife, tells her dream to her husband, and Glaumvör afterwards to hers, in order to dissuade them from going.

Kostbera.

It seemed to me thy sheets
Burned in fire,
And that a high flame
Broke through my house.

Hogni.

Here lie linen clothes,
For which you care little;
They will soon burn
Where thou didst see sheets (burning).

Kostbera.

I thought a bear had come in here:
He broke the walls;
He shook his paws so that
We were frightened;
He caught many of us in his mouth,
So that we were helpless.
There was no little[1]
Hard pushing.

Hogni.

It is a storm that will rise,
And soon become violent;
What thou thought'st to be a white bear
Will be a rainstorm from the east.

Kostbera.

I thought an eagle flew in here
Through the length of the house:

[1] There was no little hard pushing—meaning that there was a fight between the men and the bears jostling against each other.

That forebodes to us heavy fight;
It bespattered us all with blood.
Because of its threats, I thought
It was a shape of Atli's.[1]

Hogni.

We kill cattle speedily;
Then we see blood.
It often means oxen
When we dream of eagles.
True is the mind of Atli,
Whatever thou mayest dream.
They ceased;
The talk ended.

Glaumvör.

I fancied a gallows made for thee,
And thou wert going to hang thereon;
I thought that snakes ate thee,
That I buried thee alive;
That the *ragnarok* came.
Guess what it was.

Glaumvör.

A bloody sword I saw,
Drawn out of thy shirt.
It is sad to tell of such a
Dream to a near kinsman.[2]
A spear, I thought,
Had pierced thy side;
Wolves howled
At both its ends.

Gunnar.

It is dogs that run,
Barking very loud;
The yelping of dogs often
Forebodes the flying of spears.

Glaumvör.

It seemed to me a river ran
Through the length of the house,
Roaring in anger,
Rushing over the benches,
Breaking the feet of your
Two brothers here.
The water spared nothing:
This may forebode something.

Glaumvör.

It seemed to me that dead women
Came hither this night;
They were well dressed,
Wanted to choose thee;[3]
They bade thee come quickly
To their benches.
I say, the *Disir*[4]
Have abandoned thee.

(Atlamál.)

Never to dream was considered a misfortune.

"It happened that the son of a high-born woman lost his memory, as if he was insane. His mother came to King Harald, and asked him for good advice. The king advised her to go and see King Magnus, for he knew there was none better in the land, and he would give counsel. She went to King Magnus accordingly, who said, 'Did you not see King Harald?' 'I did,' answered she, and told him what he said. King Magnus added, 'Nobody is wiser than King Harald in this land, and he can give some advice if he have the will.' King Harald, on hearing this, said: 'Then I shall give some. I think I see what ails thy son: he is *draumstoli*,[5] for it is not the nature of a man that he dream not. I advise thee to go to where King Magnus has washed his hands,

[1] One of Atli's shapes, which he could change himself into.
[2] Her husband.
[3] Summon to join the dead.
[4] Guardian spirits; *Disir*, the shapes of dead women. Cf. Gisli Súrsson.
[5] Dreamstolen, meaning, that the ability of dreaming had been taken away from him.

and let the boy drink from the water. Then you shall make him sing. Though he is struck by sleepiness and yawning, you shall not let him sleep, but take him to where the king has rested himself, and let him fall asleep there, and then it is most likely that a dream will appear to him.' She did all as she had been told, and her son slept there a while; and when he awoke he smiled and said, 'I dreamed, mother. It seemed as if the Kings Magnus and Harald came to me, and each spoke in one of my ears.' 'Rememberest thou, my son,' asked she, 'what each one of them said?' 'I do,' he said. 'King Magnus said, "Be as good as you can." Not long after, King Harald said, "Be most quick at learning, and retain in your memory what you learn as best you can."' This boy afterwards became a remarkable man."

"King Halfdan (the Black) never dreamt. He sought advice from Thorleif the Wise what to do. The latter told the king what he himself used to do when he wanted to know something beforehand. He used to lay himself to sleep in a pigsty, and was then always sure of a dream. The king in consequence did the same, and also had a dream" (Halfdan the Black, c. 7).

There was supposed to be a kind of magical sleep which came over any one who was stung by a sleep-thorn (*svefn-thorn*) placed in the ear. This magical sleep could not be broken until the sleep-thorn fell out of the ear of the person under the spell.

"The king (Helgi) had drunk so heavily that he at once fell asleep on the bed, and the queen seized her opportunity and stung him with a *sleep-thorn;* when all was quiet she rose, shaved off all his hair and besmeared him with tar, then she took a leather bag and put some cloth in it in which she wrapped him up, and bade some men take him down to his ships. She roused his men, saying that their king had gone on board and wished to sail, as there was a fair wind. They all jumped up as quickly as they could, but as they were drunk did not know what they were doing; they went to the ships, and saw no king but a very large leather bag. They wanted to see what was in it and wait for the king, as they thought he would come later on. When they untied it they found the king inside. The sleep-thorn dropped down and he awoke from a bad dream, and was enraged with the queen" (Hrólf Kraki's Saga, c. 7).[1]

[1] Cf. also Sigrdrifumal.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The old Asa belief and Christianity—Clinging to the old faith—King Hakon the Christian and the heathen bœndr—Mixture of the two creeds—Hakon attempts to Christianize the people—Their opposition—Performance of ancient rites in secret after the introduction of Christianity—Sceptics—Adaptation of Christian ideas to the old belief—Cruelty of the earlier Christian kings.

In the following accounts we see the struggle between Christianity and the old Asa belief. Hakon, the foster-son of Athelstan, so named because he had been fostered by that king in England, came back to Norway a Christian, but his people clung to the old faith, and to strengthen himself in the country he at first found it necessary to observe the tenets of his religion in secret. He ordered the Yule-feast to be celebrated at Christmas, and persuaded some of his best friends to adopt Christianity.

"Hakon was a good Christian when he came to Norway; but as all the land was heathen, and there were much sacrificing and many chiefs, and he much needed the help and friendship of the people, he decided to conceal his Christianity, and kept Sundays, and fasting on Fridays, and the greatest festivals. He made it a law that the Yule should begin at the same time as that of the Christians, and that every man should have a certain measure of ale, or pay a fine, and keep the days holy while Yule lasted. It formerly began on hökunótt (the midwinter-night), and it was kept for three nights. He wanted to make the people Christians, when he got established in the land and had fully subjected it to himself. He sent to England for a bishop and other priests. When they came to Norway, Hakon made known that he would try to Christianize the land" (Hakon the Good's Saga, c. 15; Fornmanna Sögur, 1).

"Wise men say that some of those who settled in Iceland

had been baptized, and that most of those who came from the West (British Islands) had been baptized. Among them are named Helgi the Lean, Örlyg the Old, Helgi Bjóla, Jörund the Christian, Aud the Deep-minded, Ketil, and others who came from the West; and some of them kept Christianity well till their death-day; but their families seldom preserved it, for some of their sons raised temples and sacrificed, and all the land was heathen for nearly one hundred winters" (Landnáma, v., c. 15).

Sigurd Thorisson, when a heathen, was accustomed to keep the three feasts held during the year; he afterwards adapted them to the new religion, which was destined finally to oust paganism.

"When he became a Christian he continued his custom with the feasts. He then had in the autumn a great feast for his friends, and a Yule-feast in the winter, and still invited many people; the third feast he had at Easter-time (*Páskar*), and then also invited many. This he continued while he lived" (St. Olaf's Saga, 123).

But the struggle continued for some time, for the people were loth to abandon the ancient faith, and Hakon was obliged, as king, to assist at the sacrificial feast at the temple at Hladir. Sigurd jarl on one occasion dedicated the first toast to Odin, and the king drank out of the horn, first making the sign of the cross over it. One of those present who watched him saw this, which displeased him very much; whereupon we see by the answer of Sigurd that he tried to make the people believe that it was Thor's sign, from which we must conclude that the two signs were very much alike.

The following day the bœndr, who wanted the king to observe the tenets of the ancient belief, wished him to eat horse-flesh, then to drink the gravy, and finally to eat the fat; but as he would do none of these, he had to "open his mouth over the handle of the kettle." At the *Frostathing*, Hakon made a speech, wherein he said he wanted the people to be Christians and keep Sundays, which the bœndr did not like. Asbjörn, a powerful bondi, answered thus:—

"'When thou didst hold a *Thing* the first time in Thrándheim, and we had taken thee for king and got our odals, we thought we had grasped heaven with our hands; now we do not

know whether we have become free, or thou wilt make us thralls again in a curious manner, as thou wantest us to scorn the belief which our fathers and forefathers had before, first in the *burning age* and now in the *mound age;* many of them have been much more eminent than we, but nevertheless this belief has been good for us. We have loved thee highly, so that we have given thee with us the rule of all laws and land-rights. Now it is our will and decision to have and keep the laws which thou didst establish at the *Frostathing,* and to which we then consented; we will all follow thee and hold up thy kingship while any of the bœndr here at this *Thing* are alive, if thou, king, wilt show moderation and ask of us only what we can grant thee, and what is not unfeasible. But if thou wilt go so far in this matter as to deal with us by force and overbearing, we have all of us determined to part from thee, and take another chief, that we may be free to hold the belief we wish to have; now thou shalt make thy choice, king, before the *Thing* is closed.' The bœndr cheered this speech much, and said they wanted to have it as Asbjörn said; it was a loud noise. Sigurd jarl said, when he got a hearing: 'It is the will of King Hakon to assent to all that the bœndr want, and never to part from your friendship.' The bœndr said they wanted the king to sacrifice for good seasons and peace, as his father did. The grumbling ceased, and they closed the *Thing.* Thereupon Sigurd spoke to the king, and told him not to flatly refuse the wish of the bœndr, and that it would not do to act otherwise, 'for, as you have heard, it is the strong will of the chiefs and all the people; but I will find some way out of the difficulty.' The king assented to this.

"In the autumn during the winter-nights there was a large sacrificing-feast at Hladir, and thither came King Hakon. He had been accustomed when he was present at sacrifices to take his meals in a small house with few men. The bœndr complained that he did not sit in his high-seat at such a great feast; the jarl told him to do it, and he did it. When the first horn was filled, Sigurd jarl spoke and consecrated it to Odin; he drank from it to the king; the king took it and made a sign of the cross over it; then a man called Kár of Grýting said: 'Why does the king behave thus? Will he no longer worship[1] the gods?' Sigurd jarl answered: 'The king acts like all others who believe in their own strength and might; he signs his cups to Thor; he made a hammer-sign over it before he drank it.'[2] That evening all was quiet. Next day when they sat down at the tables the bœndr crowded towards the king and

[1] Sacrifice to.

[2] This passage seems to imply that those who believed in their own strength only made the sign of Thor.

asked him to eat flesh (horseflesh, another text); the king would by no means do it. Then they asked him to drink the broth, which he would not. Then they asked him to eat the grease [fat of the soup; another text, the blood], and he would not. Thereupon they were going to attack him. Sigurd tried to reconcile them, and asked the bœndr to stop the tumult; he said the king was going to open his mouth over the handle of the kettle where the steam of the horseflesh-broth had made it greasy. The king went to it and wrapped a linen cloth round the handle, and opened his mouth over it. Then he went to his seat, and none of them, bœndr or king, liked it well" (Fornmanna Sögur, i., c. 22, 23).

"King Olaf went with his men after Yule to Thrándheim. Kjartan, Bolli and Halfred Ottarsson were with him, and many Icelanders; and he had a large and fine host. When he came to Mœri those chiefs of the Thrands who were most opposed to Christianity were there, and with them all the great bœndr who had before been accustomed to keep up the sacrifices there; a great crowd was present, and, as had been agreed upon at the Frostathing, a *Thing* was summoned, and both parties went fully armed to it. At first there was noise and tumult; but when it subsided, and a hearing could be got, King Olaf bade the bœndr be christianized, as he had done before. Járnskeggi (Iron-beard) answered on behalf of the bœndr as before, and said: 'Now, as before, king, we do not want thee to break our laws; it is our will, king, that thou sacrificest like other kings have done here in the country before thee and other chiefs of the Thrands, Sigurd Hlada jarl, and Hakon jarl (the great), who before thee was chief over the greater part of this country; he was a famous man on account of his wisdom and bravery, though he had not king's name; for long his rule was very well liked, and he did not lose it through preaching such lawlessness that no one should believe in the god he liked; nor did his father. Hakon Adalsteinsfostri has been the only one who brought this forward; the Thrands got bitter and threatened him if he continued this, and after the persuading of Sigurd jarl and other friends of his he thought right to give in to the bœndr; the only thing that will do for thee is to act as we told thee before this winter, for we have not changed our mind since about the belief.' The bœndr cheered loudly the speech of Skeggi, and said they wanted it all to be as he had said. Then the king said: 'I will do as we agreed to at the *Thing* of Frosta; I will now enter the temple, and see your proceedings and the preparing of the sacrifice.' The bœndr were well pleased, and went to the temple. The king went in with a few of his men and some of the bœndr. All

who went in were unarmed; the king had a gold ornamented staff in his hand. When they came into the temple there was no lack of idols. Thor sat in the middle, and was most worshipped; he was tall, and ornamented all over with gold and silver. The king raised the staff and struck Thor so that he fell down from the altar and was broken; then the king's men who had entered rushed forward and knocked down all the gods from their altars. While they were in, Járnskeggi was slain outside the door of the temple by the king's men" (Fornmanna Sögur, c. 166, 167).

It was so difficult to make any progress in christianizing the people, that they were for a time allowed to perform their rites secretly. The bœndr were little satisfied with the religious belief of their king. The eight chiefs who superintended the sacrifices (probably from the eight fylkis of the Thrándheim district) united to exterminate the Christian religion.

"These eight men who ruled over the sacrifice made an agreement that the four chiefs from outer Trandheim should overthrow Christianity, and the four from inner Thrandheim should force the king to sacrifice" (Hakon the Good's Saga, c. 19).

"Gunnhild's sons had embraced Christianity in England, but when they began to rule in Norway they could not make any progress in christianising the people; but wherever they could they tore down the temples and spoiled the sacrifices, and thus became very much disliked by the people. The good years also soon ceased in the land. The kings were many, and each had his hird around him, and therefore spent much and were greedy of property; so they did not well observe the laws established by King Hakon. They were handsome men, large and strong, and great men of *idróttir*"[1] (Fornmanna Sögur, I).

"Thorbjörn Ongul (hook) had a foster-mother, Thurid; she was very old, and people thought her good for little. In heathen times when she was young, she had been very skilled in witchcraft, but she appeared to have forgotten all this. Although Christianity prevailed in the land, there were many traces of heathendom left. It had been the law of the land that it was not forbidden to sacrifice secretly or perform other old customs, but if it was discovered it was to be punished by lesser outlawry" (Gretti's Saga, c. 80).

The following passage shows how firmly rooted amongst the

[1] Athletic and mental exercises. See vol. ii., p. 369.

people was the belief in the power of Thor, the sight of whose image was alone sufficient, in their minds, to make the God of the Christians vanish before it, and how hard was the struggle when they had to give up that belief.

"Olaf had all the most prominent men there (in Upplönd) taken, both in Lesjar and in Dofrar, and they were forced to accept Christianity or suffer death, or, if able, flee away. Those who received Christianity gave into the hands of the king their sons as hostages and pledges of their faith. The king stayed overnight at Bœar in Lesjar, and left priests there. Then he went through Lorodal and came to Stafabrekka. The river Otta runs through the valley, and the fine district on both sides is called Lóar. The king could look over the whole length of the district. 'It is a pity that we must burn a district so fine,' said the king. He came down into the valley with his men, and they stayed overnight at the farm Nes, and the king chose a loft as his sleeping-room, which is there still (Snorri's time) and has not been changed since. He stayed there five nights, and cut a *Thing-summons*, summoning men from Vagar, Lóar, and Hedal, and at the same time let them know that they should either fight battles against him and suffer from his ravages, or accept Christianity, and bring him their sons as hostages. Thereafter they came to him and obeyed, but some fled south to Dalir.

"Dala-Gudbrand was the name of a man who ruled like a king over the Dalir, and was *Hersir* by title. Sigvat Scald compared him in regard to power and large possessions to Erling Skjálgsson. Gudbrand had a son who is mentioned here. When he heard that King Olaf had come to Lóar and forced men to accept Christianity he cut a war arrow and summoned all the men of Dalir to the farm Hundthorp to meet him. They all came, and it was a multitude of men, because the lake Lög lies near there, and they could come as well by water as by land. Gudbrand held a *Thing*, and said: 'A man, by name Olaf, has come to Lóar, and wants us to take a new belief and break all our gods asunder, and says he himself has a much greater and mightier god. It is a wonder that the earth does not burst asunder under him when he dares speak such things, or that our gods allow him to live any longer. I expect if we carry Thor out of our temple at the *bœr* where he is, and if he looks on Olaf and his men, Olaf's god and himself and his men will melt and vanish, for this has always helped us.' They all shouted at once that Olaf

should never escape thence if he came to them, and they said he would not dare to advance farther south in the Dalir. They sent seven hundred men north to Breida to spy, with the son of Gudbrand, eighteen winters old, as leader, and many other prominent men. These men came to the farm Hof and remained there three nights, and many who had fled from Lesjar and Lóar and Vágar, unwilling to adopt Christianity, joined them there. King Olaf and Sigurd, the bishop, left teachers in Lóar and Vagar.

"The king went to the bœndr and held the *Thing* with them. The day was very wet. When the *Thing* was opened the king rose and told them that the men of Lesjar, Lóar and Vagar had accepted Christianity and torn down their sacrificing-houses, and now believed in the true God, who shaped heaven and earth and knew all things. The king sat down, and Gudbrand answered: 'We do not know about whom thou art talking; dost thou call him God whom neither thou nor any other can see? We have a god whom we may see every day, but he is not out to-day because the weather is wet. He will look terrible and great to you. I expect that fear will creep into your breasts if he comes to the *Thing*. But as thou sayest that thy God is so powerful, then let him make the weather to-morrow cloudy, with no rain, and we will meet here.' Thereupon the king went home to his room, and with him Gudbrand's son as a hostage, while the king gave them another man in his place. In the evening the king asked Gudbrand's son how their god was made. He answered he was made after Thor (his likeness); had a hammer in his hand; was of a large size, and hollow inside; that a platform was made under him, on which he stood when outside the temple; that he did not lack gold and silver on him; that four loaves of bread were brought to him every day, and as much meat. Then they went to bed. But the king was awake all that night and prayed. When it was day he went to mass, then to his meal, and then to the *Thing*. The weather was as Gudbrand had said. The bishop rose in his gown with a mitre on his head and a crozier in his hand, and preached to the bœndr and told them many tokens which God had shown, and ended his speech well. Thórd Istrumagi (paunch-belly) answered: 'This horned man with a staff in his hand with a top like a crooked ram's horn talks much. As you, comrades, say that your god works so many tokens, then ask him to-morrow before sunrise to let the weather be bright and sunny, then we will meet and do one of two things—agree on this matter, or fight a battle.' They parted for a time.

"Kolbein the Strong, who was with King Ólaf, had his kinsmen in the Fjords. He was always so dressed that he was girt with a sword, and had a large stick in his hand which some call 'club.' The king told him that he should stand next him that morning, and then said to his men: 'Go this night to the boats of the bœndr and bore holes in all of them, and take away their horses from the farms where they are and ride on them. This was done. The king stayed all night at the farm, and prayed God to clear this difficulty with His mercy and grace. After the matins, about daybreak, he went to the *Thing*. When he came some of the bœndr had arrived. They saw a large crowd of bœndr coming to the *Thing*, carrying a large image, ornamented all over with gold and silver. When the bœndr present saw it, they all rushed up and bowed to the monster. Then it was placed on the middle of the *Thing-plain*. On one side sat the bœndr, on the other the king and his men. Then Dala-Gudbrand rose and said: 'Where is your god now, king; I think he now carries his chin rather low. It seems to me that your boasting, and that of the horned man whom you call bishop, sitting at your side, is less than yesterday. It is because our god, who rules all, has come, and looks on you with keen eyes; and I see that you are full of terror now, and dare scarcely look up with your eyes. Now throw off your superstition and believe in our god, who has you altogether in his power.' He ended his speech. The king said to Kolbein the Strong, so that the bœndr did not hear: 'If during my speech it happens that they look away from their god, then strike him as hard a blow as thou art able with the club.' Then he rose and said: 'Many things hast thou (Gudbrand) spoken to us this morning; thou wonderest that thou art not able to see our God, but we expect He will soon come to us. Thou dost threaten us with thy god, who is blind and deaf, and can neither help himself nor others, and can move nowhere from his place unless he is carried: I expect that in a short time evil will happen to him. Now look into the east; there comes our God with great light.' The sun was rising, and all the bœndr looked towards it. At the same moment Kolbein struck their god so that he burst all asunder, and mice large as cats, and vipers and worms, ran out. The bœndr were so frightened that they fled, some to their ships; but when they launched them they were filled with water, and they could not get on them. Those who ran to their horses found them not. The king had them called to him, and said he wished to speak with them, and they came back to the *Thing*. Then the king rose and said:

'I do not know why you make this tumult and uproar; now you can see what power your god had to whom you brought gold and silver, food and provisions; you saw what beings had eaten him, mice and worms, vipers and adders. Those who believe in such things, and will not leave off their folly, are the worse for it. Take your gold and costly things scattered on the plain; bring them home to your wives, and never hereafter ornament tree or stones with them. Now here are two choices: either you accept Christianity now, or fight a battle against me to-day, and may those get the victory whom the God in whom we believe wills.' Dala-Gudbrand rose and said: 'A great loss have we suffered in our god, but as he could not help us we will now believe in the God in whom thou believest.' They all accepted Christianity, and the bishop baptized Gudbrand and his son. King Olaf and Sigurd the bishop left teachers there; and those who were foes parted as friends, and Gudbrand had a church made in the Dalir" (St. Olaf, Heimskringla, 117–119).

But even in early times, before Christianity had made any advance among the Northmen, there were sceptics such as Hrolf Kraki, Orvar Odd, and others, who had little or no belief. Examples are given in the Sagas of others in later times, when Christianity had gained a footing in the country, who also had no belief. When King Olaf Tryggvason asked Eindridi what was his religious belief, the latter answered:—

"'I have made up my mind never to believe in logs or stones, though they be in the shape of fiend or man, whose power I don't understand; and though I have been told that they have great power, it seems to me very unlikely, for I find that those images which are called gods are in every way uglier and less powerful than myself.' The king asked: 'Why dost thou then not believe in the true God, who is all powerful, and let thyself be baptized in his name?' 'Because,' Eindridi replied, 'it has never before been put before me, and no one on your behalf has told me about this God, whom you call almighty; but another more important reason is that, as I would not believe what my father and kinsmen told me about their gods, I have decided never to hold that belief which is in every way so unlike theirs, unless I am fully convinced that your God is as almighty as you call him'" (Fornmanna Sögur).

When Christianity predominated among the people, we find that sacrifices and worship of heathen gods were forbidden.

"When Harald Gormsson the Dana king had become a Christian, he sent an order throughout his realm that all the people should get baptized and be converted to the true faith. He went round himself, and punished and forced those who were unwilling. He sent two jarls to Norway with many men to preach Christianity there; their names were Urguthrjót and Brimiskjar. Many people were baptized in the Vikin which belonged to King Harald. After Harald's death his son Svein Tjúguskegg (forked beard) soon went on an expedition to Saxland and Frisland, and later to England. The Northmen who had adopted Christianity turned again to their sacrifices as before, like the people did in the northern part of the country (Norway). Olaf Tryggvason said he would christianize the whole of Norway or lose his life. 'I will make you all great and powerful men, for I trust you best for the sake of kinship and other relationship.' They all consented to do whatever he commanded, and follow him in all that he wished, with all those who would take their advice. Then Olaf made known to the people that he would preach Christianity to all men in his realm." (Olaf Tryggvason, Heimskringla, c. 59).

"Blót (worship by sacrifice) is forbidden to us—we shall neither worship heathen *vættir* (guardian spirits), nor gods, nor mounds (*haugar*), nor altars (*horgs*). If a man is known and convicted of secretly throwing up a mound, or making a house and calling it hörg, or raising a pole and calling it *skaldstong* (*i.e.*, imprecation-pole), he shall thereby forfeit every penny of his property" (King Sverri's Kristinrétt).[1]

It is curious to see how Christian ideas were transformed. The poet Eilif Gudrúnarson says of Christ, that he is "*strong against the Jötnar*"; he was possibly thinking of Thor. Halfred says the Christian dogmas are not more poetical than the old belief.

In a fragment of a song on Christ, the poet Eilif Gudrúnarson says that Christ sits at the well of Urd (Later Edda, Skáldskaparmál, 52)—

"Men say he (Christ) sits on a rock
South at the well of Urd.
Thus the mighty lord of the gods
Has strengthened himself with the lands of Rome."

It appears that the eating of horseflesh was forbidden by the early Christians. The Emperor Otto having consulted his

[1] Cf. also Gulathing's Law, c. 29.

chiefs as to what steps should be taken to provide provisions for the army, when fighting against the Danes south of Danavirki, was advised by them either to withdraw from the country, or slay some of the horses for food. To this the Emperor replied:—

"To this advice there is a great drawback, for it is the greatest sacrilege for baptized men who can in any other manner prolong their lives to eat horseflesh" (Olaf Tryggvason, Fornmanna Sögur, c. 1).

The Halfred's Saga, which relates how Halfred, who had been baptized, was for some time with the King, Olaf Tryggvason, and asked him to hear a song, which at first the king declined to hear, as too heathen for him, shows how hard was the struggle with some men to entirely give up the old faith.

"Of yore I worshipped well
Him the bold-minded
Lord of Hlidskjalf (Odin);
The luck of men changes."

The king said: "This is a very bad stanza; thou must improve it."

"Every kindred has made songs
To win the love of Odin;
I remember the songs
Of the men of our time,
But because I serve Christ
I must hate against my will
The first husband of Frigg (Odin),
For his power I liked well."

The king replied: "The gods dwell much in thy mind, and I do not like it."

"Enricher of men, I forsake
The god-name of the raven-worshipper (Odin)
Who in heathendom performed
A trick praised by the people."[1]

"This makes it no better; make a stanza to mend this."

"Frey and Freyja and the strong Thor
Ought to be angry with me;
I forsake the offspring of Njörd.[2]
The angry (gods) may be friends with Grimnir (Odin);
I will call on Christ, for all love
The only Father and God;
The anger of the Son I dislike,
He is the famous ruler of earth."

"This is a good song, and better than none; sing more."

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[1] This refers to stealing the mead. | [2] Frey and Freyja.

"It is the custom with the Sygna king[1]
To forbid sacrifices;
We must shun most of
The time-honoured dooms of the Nornir;
All men throw
The kindred of Odin to the winds;
Now I am forced to pray to Christ
And leave the offspring of Njörd."

(Halfred's Saga, c. 6.)

That conversion to Christianity did not always at first have a softening influence over the character of its converts is to be seen from the following passages:—

"The great Hákon jarl was a zealous sacrificer. When he came to Vikin he found that the (Emperor Otto's) jarls Urguthrjót and Brimisskjar had broken down the temples and christianized all the people they could. Hákon had all the broken temples rebuilt, and sent word all over Vikin that no man should believe in the faith which the jarls had imposed. He went northward across the land to Thrándheim, and there first remained quiet. He ruled over the whole of Norway, but never afterwards paid any taxes to the King of Denmark. Afterwards he was in all things worse and more heathen than he had been before he was baptized" (Fornmanna Sögur, vol. i., ch. 73).

"Hákon was open-handed with property toward his men, and for a long time beloved by the whole people; but he had the greatest misfortune to his dying day, which was not strange, for he was always guileful, unfaithful and treacherous, both to friends and foes, and the greatest *god-nithing* and sacrificing man: the time had come when Almighty God had intended that the sacrifices and heathendom, and the evil messenger of the devil, Hákon jarl, should be condemned, and the holy faith and true customs take their place. When Hákon was slain, he had been Jarl thirty-three winters since the fall of his father, Sigurd Jarl; he was twenty-five when his father fell, and lacked two winters of sixty" (Fornmanna Sögur, i., c. 104).

"'Now, Sigurd, thou hast jarlship over this realm, which I call my own, as well as all other realms, which King Harald Fairhair owned, and each of his descendants have inherited one after the other. As it has happened that thou hast come into my power, thou hast two choices: the first is that thou and all thy dependents shall embrace the true faith and be baptized, and then thou shalt hold from me the rule thou hast heretofore, and what is worth more, live with Almighty God eternally in the kingdom of heaven, if thou observest His commands. The other choice is very bad, and very unlike

[1] Olaf Tryggvason.

the former: that thou shalt die in this place, and I will go with fire and sword over the islands and lay waste this whole realm, unless the people will believe in the true God; and, if thou shalt make this choice, then thou wilt, as all others who believe in a skurdgod (carved god, idol), after a sudden death, suffer terribly with the fiend in the flames of hell without end.' As the Jarl was then situated, he chose to embrace the true faith.

"The Jarl and all his men were therefore baptized. Thereupon he became King Olaf's man, and bound this with oath. Sigurd Jarl then took the country as fief from the king, and gave him as hostage his son *Hvelp* (whelp) or *Hundi* (dog), whom King Olaf had baptized with the name Hlödver, and taken to Norway. Thereupon King Olaf sailed from the Orkneys, and left behind learned men to teach the people in the holy faith. The king and the jarl then separated as friends" (St. Olaf's Saga).

The later accounts of the struggle between the two creeds show how many crimes were committed avowedly in the name of conscience and religion, but really in that of superstition and ignorance, which brings with it bigotry, vandalism and murder, the curse of mankind; and we see that the people had a dislike to the adoption of christian names.

"He (King Olaf, the Saint) had Hrærek blinded in both eyes and took him with him; he had the tongue of Gudröd, King of Dalir, cut out; Hring and two others he forced to give oaths that they would leave Norway and never come back" (St. Olaf, Heimskringla, c. 74).

"Olaf Tryggvason and Bishop Sigurd both went with many warships to Godey (god-isle), where Raud the Strong, a man of sacrifices, lived. Olaf attacked the loft where Raud slept, and broke it and went in. Raud was taken and tied, and of the men in there some were killed and others taken. Raud was led before the king, who bade him let himself be baptized; 'then,' said the king, 'I will not take thy property, but be thy friend if thou wilt do this.' Raud cried out against this, and said he would never believe in Christ, and blasphemed much. The king grew angry, and said Raud should die the most hideous death. He had him taken out and lashed to a beam, a stick was placed between his teeth to force open his mouth, in which a snake was placed; but it would not go in, and recoiled, because he blew against it. Then the king had a stalk of angelica put in Raud's mouth;

some say that the king put his war-horn into his mouth with the snake in it; he had a red-hot iron bar put on the outside of it. The snake recoiled into the mouth of Raud, and down his throat, and ate its way out of his side, and Raud died. The king took thence a large quantity of gold and silver and other loose property, weapons, and many costly things. He had slain or tortured all those of Raud's men who would not be baptized" (Olaf Tryggvason, c. 87).

"Olaf Sviaking had a son by his queen who was born on the day of St. James' vigil; when he was baptized the bishop called him Jacob. The Sviar disliked that name, and said that never had a Sviaking been called Jacob" (St. Olaf, c. 89).

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAND.

Division of the land—Supposed origin of the division—The odal—How land could become odal—Redemption of the odal—Laws in regard to redemption—Purchase of land and closing of the bargain—Existence of leaseholds—Commons—Rights of common—Laws regulating commons.

In old Sweden and Norway, and no doubt all over the North, the land was divided into *Herad* and *Fylki*. In Sweden there were small and large *Herad;* in Norway there were both *Herad* and *Fylki*, the latter probably corresponding to the larger *Herad* in Sweden.

We are unable to find how and when such division of land began to take place among the people: that a sudden emigration burst upon the country we have no proof whatever.

The word *her* ("host") implies a certain number of people or families coming together for mutual protection or otherwise, and the whole was called host. These either took by force or settled peacefully upon certain tracts of land, which were then called *Herad*, probably on account of being the land of the *her*. In the course of time—perhaps for mutual protection, or for some other reason unknown to us—those *Herad* or *Fylki*, though entirely independent of each other in their internal affairs, were united together, and were called *thjöd*, or *veldi*, which means a nation made up of different *Fylki* and *Herad*. So the land of the Swedes was called Svi-thjód, or Svia-veldi; and that of the Danes and Norwegians, Dana-veldi and Noregs-veldi.

A man who settled upon a Herad without lawful right could be summarily ousted without resorting to legal remedies.

Thormod and Thorgeir made themselves obnoxious to the people of the neighbourhood by their wild habits. Those who thought themselves wronged by them went to Vermund (chief of the Herad), and laid their complaints before him. Vermund

summoned Hávar and Bersi (the fathers of the two young men) to him, and told them that the people disliked their sons.

"'Thou, Hávar,' he said, 'art a man not belonging to the herad, and hast settled here without permission. We did not object to thy living here till thy son Thorgeir caused dissension; we want thee to break up thy residence and depart from Isafjord; but Bersi and his son we will not drive away, for they are *heradsmen*'" (Fostbrœdra Saga).

Odal.—We find a great part of the land divided into *Odal*—i.e., the title to which was absolute, and not dependent on a superior—but how this was acquired we do not know. The probability is that in the beginning of the migration or conquest each head of a family took, or had allotted to him, a certain amount of land as *odal*—the extent of land being proportionate to the size of his family or to his rank. Then the settler became a *buandi*[1] (a dweller), that is, of the Herad of which he formed an integral part. The word *bondi* is still applied in Norway to odal men, who own farms in their own name. To this day there are *odal* farms in Sweden and Norway which have remained in the same family almost from time immemorial; and such were the safeguards in olden times against alienation of land, that it has been impossible for those estates to be gradually absorbed into the hands of comparatively few men, as has been unfortunately done in some other countries; and as no conquerors have come to dispossess the original owners, and give large tracts of land to their followers, the land in many parts of Scandinavia, with the exception of Denmark, has remained much divided to this day. Besides *odal* there was *kaup land*, the latter being freehold land that could be bought, and loose property.

The Gulathing's Law enumerates seven ways in which landed property could become *odal*:—

"1. When it had descended through four generations in unbroken succession. 2. When the land had been given as *veregild*.[2] 3. When it had been got by so-called *branderfd*.

[1] *Buandi*, plural *buendr*; *bondi*, plural *bœndr*; *bóandi*, plural *bóendr*. These are different forms of the same name; the transition from *buandi* to *bóandi* and then to *bondi* is easily traced. The form to-day is *bonde*. The original meaning is a dweller; the verb to dwell is *búa—bjó—búid*.

[2] Indemnity, see p. 544.

4. When it was received as *heidlaun* (fee-reward), i.e., when, in later times, it was given by a king to his servant for faithful services. 5. At a later period, when it was given by the king as *drekkulaun* (drink-reward), either for having been well entertained, or as a reward for nursing the king. 6. When it was received as reward for fostering a child (*barnfóstrlaun*). 7. When it had been acquired in exchange for another *odal*" (Gulathing's Law, 270).

"The inheritance is called *branderfd* if a man receives another to keep him in bad and good circumstances, and feeds him till fire and pyre (until he dies)" (Gulath., 108).

In all the last six modes of acquiring the land, it is of course understood that the land must have been the *odal* of the grantor.

The odal could not be alienated from the family, and if sold to any one outside the family, the latter had the right of redemption, which consisted in this: that in case the land was sold to a stranger, the nearest of kin had the right to redeem the odal from the new owner within a certain time and on certain conditions. These differed in the different laws. The Gulathing's Law, which most extensively treats this subject, sets as a rule for the redemption, that it could be made by the nearest of kin after lawful notice, on payment of a sum one-fifth less than that at which the land was appraised by arbitrators. The kinsman, however, in order to keep this right open, had to publicly announce it at the Thing under whose jurisdiction the land lay, within *twenty years* after the sale, so that twenty years should never be allowed to pass between two announcements. If this was neglected, the next of kin had not thereby lost his right of redemption, but he had to pay the full value of the land.

"If the land lies (is in possession of the buyer) for twenty winters and no notice is given, full value must be paid for it" (Gulath., 272).

The right of redemption was not forfeited until the land had been in the family of the new owner for the period of sixty years without any notice of redemption having been given.

"If the land belongs to the same line of family for sixty years or more, it becomes the odal of the owner, so that no man can buy it from him" (N. G. L., ii. 93).

"If there are two brothers, and one of them dies before his father and leaves a son, then he shall redeem that part of the odal at four-fifths [1] of the value from his father's brother. But he cannot do it before his grandfather is dead" (Gulathing's Law, 294).

"When the redeemer has claimed the land according to law, he shall carry the money to the land at the middle of the fast on the morning next after the washing-day (Saturday), when three weeks of the fast are left. He shall put it on a stone where field and meadow meet. He shall speak thus: 'Be here on the land Thursday in the Easter-week, and take the value of the land, as much as it is valued in lawful money. I will come here with honest men, and thou shalt have as many here. They shall value the land as it is done when men redeem their odals. The half of the money shall be in gold and silver, and the other half in native bondsmen not older than forty and not younger than fifteen winters'" (Gulath., 266).

If the king was *odalsman* (i.e., next of kin) to land in the possession of another, then the redemption was to take place within the reigns of three kings, for otherwise the right of redemption was forfeited.

"If land falls to the king it must be redeemed from his steward who has the survey in the *Fylki* in which the land lies. If there is no king's steward in the *Fylki*, it must be redeemed from the steward who is next in rank and before the lives of three kings are gone. If the land is not redeemed before, it must lie where it is. Though three kings rule the land the time is reckoned as the life of one king. If the king wants to redeem land his steward shall redeem it as we do among ourselves. He must have redeemed it also before the lives of three kings are gone, else it lies where it is. Land cannot be redeemed while the king is in the *Fylki* in which the land lies" (Gulath., 271).

"The land of no man can become odal before three generations have owned it in unbroken succession and it falls to the fourth (as inheritance)" (Frostath., xii. 4).

[1] The Frostathing's Law says nothing about the deduction of one-fifth from the appraised value.

A new law enacted that the *odalsman*, in order to keep his right open, should make the usual announcement every tenth year; and the king was subject to the same regulations as other people.

"Land becomes the odal of a church if she has owned it for thirty winters" (Frostath., xii. 4).

The land was bought in the following manner, and the bargain was closed by *weapon-taking* and the shaking of hands.

"If a man buys land in the presence of many men, the thingmen shall convey the land to him. He shall summon the other man home, and thence to the Thing, and have witnesses at the Thing that he has lawfully summoned him. He shall take mould, as is mentioned in the laws, to the four corners of the hearth, and to the high-seat, and where field and meadow meet, and where pasture and stone-ridge meet, and have witnesses, and those who were present at their bargain, at the Thing that he has taken the mould lawfully. If he has full witnesses, the Thingmen shall with weapon-taking convey the land to him. Wherever they agree about the bargain, and the sale and the mould is rightly taken, it, and also the conveyance, shall be kept at a church and at an ale-house, and at a manned ship with several rowing-seats, as if it were made at a Thing. Wherever the king conveys land it shall be kept"[1] (Gulath., 292).

"The silver was then all counted, and every *penning* paid for the land. Börk then took the money, and by a *hand-shaking* transferred the land to Snorri" (Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 14).

"If a woman is *baugryg*,[2] she can inherit both odal and (loose) property, and no man can redeem it from her. The women who are odal-women and whom the odals follow are these. Daughter and sister, and father's sister, and brother's daughter, and son's daughter. The daughter and sister are two *baugrygs*. They can pay and receive wergild like men. They also have, like men, the first right to buy the land" (Gulath., 275).

Leaseholds also existed in these early days.

"Thrand leased out the lands at Gata to many, and took as high a rent as possible" (Færeyinga Saga, c. 2).

Commons.—From time immemorial the large extents of land and sea, which belonged to no individual, and used by one or

[1] Cf. also earlier Gulathing's Law, 267; earlier Frostathing's Law, vi. 4.

[2] Baugryg means a woman who, being a single daughter, could pay and receive wergild.

more communities as their common property, were called *almenning* or commons, and were under the power of the *herad*. Every one had the right to make use of wood and water on these commons; to build himself *sæter*,[1] as well as smithies and hunting-huts; to fish in the waters, hunt and trap animals; to cut timber and mow grass, observing the previous rights of any earlier user. The settler ought then to fence around his property within twelve months. Outside his home field he owned as outgrounds all the surrounding land as far as he could throw his knife. All fishing-places at some distance from the coast were commons, but the king had a right to get a fee or tax from those who fished there, which tax was one of his sources of revenue.[2]

"Every man is allowed to use water and wood on a common. Every one shall have his common as he has had it from old time. If a settlement is made on a common, the king owns it. If there is a field and meadow fenced in, he owns the land as far from the fence as he can throw his knife. The remaining is common. All that is thrown up on the coast of a common is owned by the king. If people sail along the coast or from sea and their ships founder, whoever owns the land where they are wrecked owns as much property as he can prove with witnesses. The king owns all other sea-wrecks" (Gulath., 145).

"This law have the kings given to all the men of Hálogaland; namely, the kings have given up all *fish-gifts* (taxes) from all capes and all fishing-places, except that men shall give to the king five fishes. That shall every man do who fishes in Vagar (in Hálogaland)"[3] (Frostath., xvi. 2).

"The law of seal-catching places is, that within three weeks from St. John's Mass, and six weeks from Yule, all such places are holy, and no man shall go into another's ground without leave. If a man is found in another's fishing-ground during these weeks and catches seals, he is a thief. Between these times they shall protect their seal-catching places like their land with a law stick (lag kelfi), and a *ran baug* (fine); if the thief goes then, he is fined for trespassing in another man's land. . . ." (Frostath., xiv. 11).

"Deer-enclosures every man can make on common land, if

[1] A chalet.

[2] All that was thrown up by the sea, whales, wreck, &c., belonged to the king (Gulath., 145).

[3] Some great fishing-place in Hálogaland.

he does not spoil another's hunting. . . . A spear-fence shall not stand longer than ten winters" (Frostath., xiv. 9).

Later, and after the establishment of the kingdom of Harald Fairhair, the commons as well as the odal became the property of the king; and William the Conqueror, after the conquest of England, considered himself to have the same powers as those usurped by Harald Fairhair and other northern kings.

"King Harald became the owner of all *odals*, and of all the land cultivated and uncultivated in every *Fylki*, and even of the sea and the rivers and lakes. All *bœndr* were to be his tenants, both those who cultivated the field and the saltmakers; and all fishermen, hunters and trappers, both on sea and on land, were his men" (Egil's Saga, c. 4).[1]

If a person had been living on a common during the time of three kings, none of whom reigned less than ten years, he had thereby acquired full and legal rights to his land, even though he lacked the formal consent of the king.

"If a steward or messenger of the king charges a man with dwelling on land taken from the common without the king's leave, and the man answers that the land has been held by him during the lives of three kings, none of whom ruled less than three winters, then if the steward or king's messenger denies this he shall bring forward witnesses" (Frostath., xiv. 7).

When the king gave land to a man, his successor could take it back, so the gift was only valuable for the lifetime of the king.

The customs which regulated settlements made on the land in Iceland were probably very ancient, but it is impossible to tell whether they were handed down from the time of the first settlers in the North.

Asbjörn, son of Heyangrs-Björn, a *hersir* (chief)[2] in Sogn, died at sea on his journey to Iceland, but Thorgerd, his wife and their sons came to Iceland.

"It was the custom that a woman should not take up more land than a half-grown and well-kept heifer, two winters old, could be led across during the spring-long day from sunrise

[1] Cfr. also Heimskringla, 51, 52.

[2] See p. 491.

to sunset; therefore Thorgerd led her heifer from Thoptufell, near Kviá, southwards to Kidjaklett at Jökulsfell" (Landnáma, Pt. iv., c. 10).

"Those who came out later thought the first comers had taken too much land, and on that account King Harald Fairhair established a law that no one should take up more land than he could walk over with fire in one day with his ship-companions. They were to light fires when the sun was in the east, which were to burn until night; then they were to walk until the sun was in the west and make other fires; the smoke was to be seen from the one fire to the other" (Landnáma, v., c. 1).

CHAPTER XXXV.

DIVISIONS OF PEOPLE INTO CLASSES.

Antiquity of class divisions in the North—Influence of education—The classes into which society was divided—The Jarl the progenitor of kings—Primogeniture—The thrall—Description of freemen—The freeman a farmer or bondi—Occupation of Jarl and his wife—High-born women—Marriage of the high born—Sons of Jarls—Divisions of the people at the close of the Pagan era—The Hersir or leader of the host—Customs of ancient chiefs—The Jarl in earlier and later times—The Lendirmenn the leaders and advisers of the bœndr—The position and power of the Bondi—The Haulld, a higher grade of bondi—The king—Grades of kingship—Sea kings—Consent of the Thing to the election of a king—Manner of selecting a king.

FROM very early times the people of the North were divided into classes. Men and women were educated from their childhood to believe in the superiority or inferiority of their own being, of the position inherited by them at their birth, and consequently to think themselves superior or inferior to the other people of the commonwealth. This belief was intensified by the education they received, their surroundings and their mode of life, as seen throughout from the day of their birth to the time when they were buried. The class that *governed* held that they were born to rule, and the slave to remain a slave. The lot of each had been hereditary, fate had so decreed.

This demarcation into classes was acquiesced in by the people of the land, for it could not have existed a single moment without their will, and formed an integral part of the social and political fabric throughout the whole history of the people.

But as will be seen in the perusal of these volumes, no man was allowed to rule over the people unless he excelled in many things.

The *Rigsmál* gives in a striking manner the mode of life of early times, and shows into how many classes society was divided: viz., the *slave;* the *karl* or *bondi;* the *jarl*, and the *hersir.*

In the first stanza of the Voluspa we have seen that all men are called the sons of Heimdall, of which we have an explanation in the Rigsmál. Heimdall travels about under the name of Rig, from house to house; first he goes to *Ai* and *Edda* (great-grandfather and great-grandmother), then to *Afi* and *Amma* (grandfather and grandmother), and then to *Fadir* and *Módir* (father and mother).

In the poem we see the ancestry of each class under a sort of developing system—how the jarl and hersir are the progenitors of chiefs and kings; and we learn of *odal*, or of primogeniture and entail; of the hersir we learn nothing, except that he existed.

It is told there went
Along the green paths
A mighty and old
And wise As,
The strong and nimble
Rig the wanderer.

He went on thereafter
Along the middle of the path,
And came to a house;
The door was ajar;
He went in;
Fire was on the floor;
Man and wife sat there
Hoary, at the hearth,
Ái and Edda,
With her old-fashioned hood.

Rig gave them
Good advice;
He sat down
In the middle seat,
And on either side
The man and wife of the house.

Then Edda took
A lumpy loaf,
Heavy and thick,
Mixed with bran;
Then she put more
On the middle of the trencher
Broth was in the bowl;
She put it on a table.
There was boiled veal
The best of dainties.

Rig could give them
Good advice;
He rose from there,
Went to sleep,
And lay down
In the middle of the bed,
And on either side
The man and wife of the house.

There he stayed
Three nights altogether;
Then travelled on
Along the middle of the path;
Then passed
Nine months.
Edda gave birth to a child,
They sprinkled it with water.

Appearance of the Thrall.

They called him Thrall.
He grew
And throve well;
There was on (his) hands
Wrinkled skin;
Crooked knuckles.

* *

Fingers thick,
Face ugly,
Back bent,
Heels long.

Thereafter he began
To try his strength
To bind bast,
To make loads

Thereafter he carried home
Faggots the weary day.

There came to the house
The leg-walking;[1]
Scars were on her soles;
Her arm was sunburnt;
Her nose crooked;
(She) was called Thir.[2]

She sat down
In the middle of the seat;
The son of the house
Sat at her side;
They talked and whispered,
Made a bed
Thrall and Thir
Through the wearisome days.

They had children,
Lived and were happy;
* * *
They laid fences,
Enriched the plough-land,
Tended swine,
Herded goats,
Dug peat.

Description of Freemen.

Then Rig went
Right on his way;
He came to a hall;
The door was on the latch.
He went in;
Fire was on the floor,[3]
Husband and wife sat there,
Busy with their work.

A man cut there
A log into a loom-beam,
(His) beard was trimmed;
Hair lay on (his) forehead,
His shirt was tight;
There was a chest on the floor.

There sat a woman;
She twirled a *distaff*,
Stretched out her arms,
Made cloth;
There was a *sveig*[4] on her head,
A smock on her breast,
A kerchief on her neck,
Pin-brooches on her shoulders;
Afi and Amma[5]
Owned the house.

Amma gave birth to a child;
(They) sprinkled it with water,
Called it Karl,
The wife wrapped it in linen;
(It was) red and ruddy,
(Its) eyes rolled.

The Freeman, a Farmer or Bondi.

He did grow
And thrive well;
He broke oxen,
Made ploughs;
Timbered houses,
Made barns,
Made carts,
And drove the plough.

They (the parents) drove home
The maiden with the hanging keys
And with the goatskin kirtle;
They married her to Karl;
She was called Snör,
She sat down under bridal linen.
(They) lived as man and wife,
Divided rings (wealth),
Spread bedclothes,
And set up a household.

They had children;
They lived together happy.

Then follows a description of the jarl, who possessed all the qualities given by Odin, from whom many claim descent.

[1] So named probably because accustomed to walk much.
[2] Bond-woman.
[3] In later times we see that the fire-place was in the middle of the floor.
[4] Kind of head-dress.
[5] Grandfather and grandmother.

From this we learn the occupation of himself and wife and their manner of living, that he was a warrior, and had a knowledge of runes.

Rig went thence
Right onwards;
He came to a hall,
The door was to the south,
And it was shut;
A ring[1] was in the door-post.

Then he went in;
The floor was strewn with rushes;
The man and the wife sat,
Looked into (each other's) eyes;
Fadir and Modir
Played with their fingers.

The husband sat,
And twisted strings,
Bent an elm,
Shafted arrows;
And the housewife
Looked at her arms,
Smoothed the linen,
Folded the sleeves.

She let her fald stand out;[2]
A brooch was on her breast;
She wore long trailings,[3]
A blue-dyed sark;
A brow brighter,
A breast lighter,
A neck whiter,
Than pure snow.

The mother took
A broidered cloth,
A white one of flax,
Covered the table;
Then she took
Thin loaves,
White loaves of wheat,
And laid them on the cloth.

Forth she set
Full trenchers,
Silver covered,
On the table,
Shining pork
And roasted birds;
Wine was in a jug;
The cups (were) mounted;
They drank and talked;
The day was passing away.

Rig could give them
Good advice;
Then he rose,
And made his bed;
He was there
Three nights together:
Then he went on
In the middle of the path;
Then there passed
Nine months.

Modir gave birth to a boy,
Wrapped him in silk
Sprinkled him with water,
Called him jarl.
His hair was fair,
Cheeks bright;
His eyes were keen,
As a young snake's.[4]

The Jarl grew up
There in the house;
Shook the lind,[5]
Laid the strings,
Bent the elm,
Shafted the arrows,
Threw the javelins,
Shook the spears,
Rode horses,
Set on the hounds,
Brandished the sword,
Practised swimming.

[1] Probably for fastening the door.
[2] This peculiar head-dress is still found in Iceland and Normandy.
[3] A kirtle trailing, long trailing dress.
[4] In Volsunga Saga the same expression occurs.
[5] The shield of linden tree.

Out of the brushwood
Came Rig walking,
Taught him runes,
Gave him his name,
Said he was his son;
He bade him own
The *Odal*-fields,
The old homestead.

He rode on thence
Through a dark wood,
Over hoar-frosted mountains,
Till he came to a hall;
He brandished the spear,
Shook the linden,
Let the horse gallop,
Drew his sword,
Stirred up war,
Reddened the field,
Felled men for land.

He alone then ruled
Eighteen farms,
Dealt out wealth,
Gave to all
Treasures and costly things,
Bare-ribbed horses;
Scattered rings,[1]
Cut them asunder.

Appearance of the High-born Women.

The messengers drove
On the wet paths,[2]
And came to the hall
Where Hersir lived;[3]
He had a daughter
Slender-fingered,
White and gentle,
She was called Erna.

The High-born Marry together.

They asked for her
And drove home,
And married her to Jarl;
She walked under linen;
They lived together
And were happy,
Increased the kin,
Enjoyed life.

Bur was the oldest,
Barn the second,
Jód and Ádal,
Arfi, Mög,
Nid and Nidjung,
They played
Son and Svein (swain)
And played chess.
One was called Kund,[4]
Kon was the youngest.

Sons of Jarls are called Kon.

Up grew
The sons of Jarl,
They brake horses,
Bent shields,
Smoothed shafts,
Shook ash-spears.

But Kon[5] the young
Knew runes,
Everlasting runes,[6]
And life runes;
And further he knew
How to save men's lives,
To blunt edges,
To calm the sea.[7]

From this we see that the Jarl was supposed to have qualities not possessed by the lower class, which was kept in awe of him on this account.

He learnt the chirping of birds,[8]
To quench fires,
To soothe minds,
To allay sorrows;
He had the strength and energy
Of eight men.

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[1] Rings were of gold, and were used as money.
[2] Perhaps this means the sea.
[3] We are not told about the Hersir.
[4] Kund—a son, a kinsman.
[5] Kon-ung = Konung = Kung = King.
[6] Everlasting runes, probably more powerful runes than ordinary—runes that may have been only known to few.
[7] To calm the sea by spell.
[8] Some people were supposed to understand the language of birds.

He coped in runes
Against Rig jarl;
Used tricks
And outdid him;
Then he got
And then he owned
The name of Rig,
The knowledge of runes.

The young Kon rode
Through copse and forest,
Shot the bolt,
Killed birds.

Then said a crow;
It sat alone on a bough:
"Why wilt thou, young Kon,
Kill birds?
Thou shouldst rather
Horses ride
And fell the host.[1]

Dan and Danp
Own costly halls,
A higher odal
Than you have;
They know well
To ride the keel,
To teach the edges
To cut wounds."

Towards the end of the Pagan era the grades of the people were Konung, Jarl, Hersir or Lend mann, Hauld, Bondi, Leysingi, and Thrall.

The Hersir.—The dignity of Hersir was hereditary and of great antiquity, but was not as ancient as that of the Drottin or Godi.[2] The records in regard to his functions are very meagre. He was the leader of the *her* (host, or community), their chief in war and in the administration of justice; high "priest (Godi)" in regard to worship, and as such took care of the temple, superintended the sacrifices and other religious ceremonies. As a godi he held the farms and estates belonging to the temple, and sometimes received a temple-tax from the bœndr for the maintenance of the temple and sacrifices. In most instances the temple property from time immemorial belonged to the Hersir who presided at the Thing. The change of the name of the ruler from that of Godi to that of Hersir seems to point to the time when the temporal and spiritual authority were united, but we have no knowledge how it came to pass—probably it did so very gradually and insidiously.

By Harald Fairhair the independence of the Hersir, consequently of the Herad, was well-nigh annihilated, and the former never regained his position. Thus died this ancient and noble dignity, connected with the very earliest history of the ancestors of the English-speaking people. It was an office

[1] From this we see that the business of a young king was war.

[2] See p. 525.

of a patriarchal nature belonging to the social structure of that period, intimately connected with the Bondi of the Herad of which the Hersir was the hereditary head; and with the loss of his independence came that of the freedom of the Herad and of the people; and never has Norway been herself since that time. But out of evil came good. These men, who could not bear the yoke of this Royal despot, in whom there is but little to admire, except his personal bravery, afterwards migrated into different parts of Europe, as is seen from several Sagas.

"In the old age of Ketil, Harald Fairhair established his rule over Norway, so that no Kings of Fylkis or other great men could thrive there without acknowledging his power.

"When Ketil heard that King Harald intended to make him submit to the same conditions as other powerful men, to get no wergild for his kinsmen and become his tenant, he summoned a Thing of his kinsman and said: 'To your knowledge must have come our dealings with King Harald, which need not be told, for it is more necessary to take counsel about the hard conditions which he wishes to impose on us. I know for certain his enmity toward us, and that we can hope for nothing from him. It therefore seems to me that we have the choice of only two things—either to flee the country, or be slain each at his place; and I prefer to die like my kinsmen, but I do not wish to lead you into such danger by my selfwill, as I know the temper of my friends and kinsmen: they will not leave me though it may be some danger to follow me.'

"Björn, Ketil's son, replied: 'Quickly will I proclaim my choice, for I will follow the example of other highborn men, and flee this land, rather than remain here as the thrall of King Harald.' All thought this well and manfully spoken, and it was decided that they should all leave the country. Björn and Helgi wanted to go to Iceland, as they had heard that the land was good, with plenty of game and fish. Ketil however said that he would not go to that wild country in his old age, but westward, where he knew many places, as he had ravaged widely there" (Laxdœla, 2).

"Úlf Gyldir was a powerful hersir in Thelamörk. He resided at Fiflavellir, and his son Asgrim dwelt there after him. King Harald Fairhair sent his kinsman Thórorm from Thruma to get tribute from Asgrím, but he would not pay any, for he had shortly before sent to the king a Gautaland horse and much silver, but said that this was a gift, and no tax, for he had never before paid any. The king returned the property, and would not accept it" (Landnáma, v., c. 6).

"A man was called Dala-Gudbrand; he had the name of Hersir, but ruled like a king over the *Dalir* (district). Sigvat Scald compared him in power and in vast possessions to Erling Skjálgsson" (St. Olaf, Heimskringla, c. 118).

"Arnvid the blind replied: 'Lord (Herra), most unlike are red gold and clay, but greater is the difference between King and Thrall. You promised your daughter Ingegerd, who is high born in all pedigrees of Uppsvia family, which is the highest in the northern lands, for it is descended from the gods themselves'" (St. Olaf, Hkr., 96).

It was the custom of the Hersir and of chiefs to sit daily or often on the mound raised over the remains of their ancestors' kinsmen or wives, so that they could be seen for a long distance, and that every one might have access to them. At such times it seems to have been customary for the chiefs to be alone. They occupied themselves there in playing with their dogs, hunting with hawks, cutting the manes of their horses, or looking at games, &c.; or they quietly contemplated the panorama, and saw before them visions of Odin, of the Valhalla, and of their kinsmen who had gone there.

This custom of sitting on mounds seems to be of very great antiquity, and was mentioned in the earlier Edda, and in many places in the Sagas.

"Thrym the Jotun had stolen Thór's hammer, and Loki, having borrowed the eagle-shape of Freyja, goes in the dress of Freyja (see Wedding-dress), as a bride to Jotunheim, and there beholds Thrym.

Thrym sat on a mound,
The Lord of Thursar,
Braiding gold bands
For his grey hounds,[1]
And cutting even the manes
Of his horses."
(Thrymskvida, 6.)

Thorleif the wise was a chief who would not accept Christianity, and Ólaf Tryggvason sent the poet Hallfred to him on this account.

"Thorleif was wont, as was often the custom of men in ancient times, to sit on a mound not far from the bœr, and there he was when Hallfred came" (Fornmanna Sögur).

[1] Greyiom: this is the dative form which is grey in nominative; the form grey hund also occurs (Fornmanna Sögur xi. 10.)

"Thorgnýr Jarl had much loved his queen, and her mound was near the burgh. The jarl sat there often at good meals, or when he held councils, or had games played before him" (Göngu Hrólf's Saga, c. 5).

The Jarl.—The term Jarl, in the Earlier Edda, was not hereditary, but was a name of distinction given to a high-born chief who possessed warlike qualities, to the commander of a host, and, at a later time, to a chief ruling over certain districts.

In the historical period, when *Fylkis* existed, we have independent jarls of Hálogaland, whose jarldom was only different in name from that of king, to whom he was next in dignity. Later the jarldom was an office given by the king for life. Harald Fairhair named jarls for every Fylki, to govern on his behalf; but this was never completely carried out, even in his own time, for his sons became sub-kings. In the course of the tenth century the jarls, except those of Hálogaland,[1] disappeared in Norway. In Harald Fairhair's time the jarldom was inherited in the Orkneys, and the jarl, who sometimes possessed large tracts of land in Scotland, had to pay taxes to the Norwegian kings. During Harald Hardrádi's rule, in the middle of the eleventh century, there was only one jarl in Norway as a help to the king (Harald Hardrádi, Hkr., ch. 49). They often traced their title, which was sometimes considered a family title, through a long descent; and the famous *Háleygja-jarls* (the jarls of Hálogaland) traced their pedigree from Odin.[2]

"Hákon jarl ruled over Norway all along the coast over sixteen Fylkis. After Harald Fairhair had ordered that a jarl should be in every Fylki the custom was continued for a long time. Hákon had sixteen jarls under him" (Olaf Tryggvason, Heimskringla, c. 50.

In the time of Harald Fairhair there seems to have been a certain ceremony at the making of a jarl.

"In Naumudal two brothers, Herlaug and Hrollaug, were kings. They had been making a mound for three summers;

[1] The male line of Hákon Jarl the Great became extinct in his grandson, Hákon Eiríksson, in 1029.

[2] *Háleygjatal*, in which Eyvind traces the family of Hákon. Cf. also the jarls of Mœri (Rögnvald, Mœra-jarl, who was the forefather of the jarls of Orkneys and Rouen in Normandy).

it was made of stones, and lime and wood. When the mound was finished the brothers heard that Harald Fairhair was coming with a host. Then Herlaug had a great deal of food and drink conveyed to the mound, and went with eleven men into the mound and had it shut. Hrollaug went to the mound on which the kings used to sit and had his high-seat prepared for him there and sat down; he had cushions laid on the foot-board where the jarls used to sit; then he rolled himself down from his high-seat into the jarl's seat, and gave himself the name of a jarl. Thereafter he met Harald and gave him his whole realm, and offered to become his man, and told him what he had done. Harald took a sword and fastened it to his belt; then he fastened a shield to his neck and made him his jarl, and led him up to his high-seat; he gave him Naumudalsfylki and made him jarl over it" (Heimskringla, p. 53).

"Hálfdán the old had nine sons by Alvig the Wise, daughter of King Eyvind of Hólmgard. They were called Thengil, Ræsir, Gram, Gylfi, Hilmir, Jöfur, Tyggi, Skyli or Skuli, Harri or Herra.[1] These nine brothers became so famous in warfare that in all songs their names are used as names of rank, like the names of kings or jarls. They had no children, and fell in battle" (Hálfdán the Old, Later Edda).

The Lendir menn.—With the disappearance of the Hersir a new class of men, called *Lendir menn*, arose, who ranked below the Jarl, and whose office was somewhat similar to that of the Hersir; but they received their dignity, which was not hereditary, from the king, and it seldom happened that any one but the son of such a one was raised to the dignity.

Before a hundred years had passed after Harald Fairhair's usurpation of power, the Lendir menn had won such a position in the state that the rulers of the country always had to seek their help. They were the leaders and trusty advisers of the Bondi.

"Shortly after Yule, Svein Jarl gathered men all around Thrándheim, summoned the levy, and prepared his ships. At this time there were in Norway many lendir menn, several of whom were powerful, and so high-born that they were near descendants of kings or jarls; they were also very rich. Kings

[1] Herra = a lord, or master, was only used as a title after the year 1277, when knights and barons were first introduced into Norway. The word is derived from Her (host), thus meaning the lord, or perhaps at first the leader of a host.

and jarls ruling the country had great support from the lendir menn, for in each Fylki it was the lendir menn who ruled over the mass of the bœndr" (St. Olaf, c. 44).

The Bondi was a name of honour given to him who possessed lands which he cultivated with men under him, consequently the foremost chiefs of the country were bœndr.

They made and unmade the laws in the Thing, accepted or deposed the men who were to rule or ruled over them. In them lay the strength and power of the country; from their earliest youth we find them practising all kinds of athletic games, fitting themselves to be warriors on land and sea.

The *Haulld* seems to have been a higher grade of bondi, on account of the nature of the odal which he had inherited from his father and mother, and which his forefathers had owned before them. The haulld and the bondi were the only classes who could be regarded as hereditary; they formed an integral part of the herad, and were the representatives of all that was powerful and influential in the land. Throughout the whole Northern literature we see their power when assembled in the Thing.

The desire to show this power caused chiefs and rich bœndr to surround themselves with a retinue of free and warlike men.

"When Ólaf Tryggvason ruled over Norway, he gave his brother-in-law Erling one half of the land-rents, and one half of all the revenues between Lidandisnes (Lindesnœs) and Sogn. Ólaf married his other sister to Rögnvald Jarl Úlfsson, who ruled long over Western Gautland. Rögnvald's father Úlf was the brother of Sigrid the Proud, mother of Ólaf King of Sweden. Eirik Jarl did not like Erling to have so much power, and took to himself all the possessions which King Ólaf had granted to Erling; but Erling continued to take all the land-dues in Rogaland, and the inhabitants often paid them twice to him. Little did the Jarl get of the fines, for the *sýslumenn* (tax-gatherers) could not remain there. The Jarl never went to *veizlas* (entertainments, feasts) there unless he had many men with him.

"Eirik did not dare to fight against Erling, for he had many and mighty kinsmen, and was powerful and popular. He also constantly had with him as many men as a king's bodyguard. Erling was often on warfare during the summer, and won

property, for he kept up in the same manner his liberality and high living, though he had smaller and less revenues than in the days of King Ólaf" (St. Ólaf's Saga, 21).

"Thorstein Thorskabit became a most powerful man; he always had with him sixty free men" (Eyrbyggja Saga, ii.).

The King.—Kon[1] in the old Northern tongue meant a man of high birth; in the Rigsmál, the word is konung.

All descendants of Rig[2] retained the name of konung. Dyggvi, who was the first of the Ynglings, assumed this title, and later arose a class of chiefs to whom the name of konung was applied.

"His son Dyggvi then ruled the lands and of him is nothing told except that he died of sickness. . . . The mother of Dyggvi was Drótt, the daughter of King Danp, the son of Rig, who was the first that was called king (konung) in the Danish tongue; his kinsman always afterwards held the king's name to be the highest name of honour. Dyggvi was the first of his family who was called king.

"Before, they (the family) were called dróttnar (lords) and their wives dróttningar and the hird was called drótt. Each one of them was called Yngvi all his life and all together they were called Ynglingar. Drótt the drottning (queen) was the sister of Dan the Proud, after whom Danmörk (Denmark) is named" (Ynglinga, c. 20).

The process of the transfer of the ruling authority from the hands of the Hersir to those of the King cannot be clearly shown; it was most probably gradual and slow, the one being absorbed by the other. The dignity of Hersir was earlier than that of Konung.

At first the name of king was a dignity which implied power or rule with it; there were several grades.

The *Fylki* kings; the *Herad* kings; the *Skatt* kings = tax-kings or sub-kings; the *Sea-kings*, and the *Host-kings*.

The *Herad-kings*, the kings of the whole realm, who ruled over several Fylkis or Herads, were the most powerful. They were originally spiritual rulers, and traced their origin to Odin and his sons.

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[1] Pl. Konir.

[2] Rig seems to be a son of Rig Jarl, the hero of Rigsmál, whose name was otherwise *Kon*.

"At that time there were many kings in Upplönd who ruled over Fylkis, and most of them sprang from Harald Fairhair. Two brothers, Hrœrek and Hring, ruled Heidmörk, and Gudröd ruled the Gudbrandsdal. There was also a king in Raumaríki" (St. Ólaf, 34).

"Harald Fairhair reigned over Norway for a long time; but before that the country was ruled by many kings, some having one *Fylki* to govern, and others somewhat more. All these kings Harald deposed. . . . He placed a jarl in every Fylki, to rule the land and administer the laws" (Flateyjarbók).

Many of the bold spirits of the North could ill brook the yoke of the first king of Norway.

Sölvi, son of King Húnthjóf, escaped from a battle against Harald Fairhair in which his father fell. He went to King Arnvid of Sunnmœri and told him to fight against Harald.

"'Though this trouble has come on our hands, it will not be long before the same will come on yours, for I guess that Harald will soon come here when he has subjugated and made thralls of any one he pleases in Nordmœri and Raumsdal. You will have to do the same as we had to do, defend your property and your freedom, and gather together all those from whom you may expect help. I offer my help and that of my warriors against this overbearing and insolence; else you must do like the men of Naumudal, go of your free will under his yoke and become his thralls. My father thought it a victory to die in his kingship with honour, rather than become the *under-man*[1] of another king in his old age. I expect thee to think the same, and others who are of some rank and wish to use their strength'" (Egil's Saga, c. 3).

"Once King Hrólf invited his brother-in-law Hjörvard to a feast; while Hjörvard stayed at the feast it happened when the kings were outside that King Hrólf untied his breeches belt and meanwhile gave his sword to King Hjörvard; when King Hrólf had again fastened the belt he took back the sword, and said to King Hjörvard: 'We both know that it has long been said, that he who receives the sword of another man while he unties his breeches belt, shall ever after be his *under-man*; now thou shalt be my under-king, and bear it as well as others.' Hjörvard became exceedingly angry at this, but had to submit. He went home dissatisfied, nevertheless he paid tax to

[1] This custom of becoming an *under-man* is illustrated in several Sagas.

King Hrólf like others of his under-kings who had to pay him homage" (Hrólf Kraki's Saga, c. 23).

But there were men to whom the name of king was given who had neither land nor power, and finally it came to imply a leader who ruled over warriors, and who was called host-king, in the same way that the commander of a ship was called a sea-king. The latter sometimes possessed no land, and they were only leaders of smaller or larger parties of Vikings.[1] As soon as a king's son or some other prominent man had acquired a number of war-ships, he was at once called king by his companions. These men roamed wherever they pleased, plundering every man's land; their estate was upon "Rán's land"—the sea; their ships were their houses. Their acts of daring must have been numerous indeed, and the following passage gives a vivid idea of a sea-king:—

"Eystein the son of Adils ruled Svíaveldi after his father; at that time Hrólf Kraki fell at Hleidra, and kings plundered much in the Swedish realm, both Danes and Northmen. There were many sea-kings who ruled over many men, and had no land. He only was thought to fully deserve the name of sea-king, who never slept under a sooty rafter and never drank at the hearth-corner (fire-place)" (Ynglinga Saga, c. 34).

"As soon as Olaf got men and ships, his warriors gave him the name of king, for it was the custom that *host-kings*, who went on Viking expeditions, if they were *king-born*, should be given the name of king, although they ruled over no lands" (St. Olaf's Saga, c. 4).

Many of the valorous deeds of the sea-kings, whose names are only mentioned, are lost to us, but this confirms how much of the history of the famous men of the North has been lost.

It was the custom for the head kings to receive taxes from tributary or tax-kings.

"Now Knút the Powerful had won England by battles and fights, and he met with much difficulty before the people of the land became obedient to him. He considered himself as possessing all Norway as an inheritance; but Hákon, his nephew, thought he owned part of it, and that he had been forced to leave it in a shameful manner. One reason that

[1] The word *Viking* has, of course, nothing to do with king.

Knút and Hákon had kept quiet over their claim on Norway was, that when first King Olaf Haraldsson came into the land, the whole people gathered together and would hear of nothing but that he should be king of the whole country; but afterwards, when they thought they were oppressed on account of his overbearing, some left the country. Many eminent men and sons of powerful bœndr had gone to Knút on various errands; and each one who came to Knút asked his friendship, and obtained much property. There was also greater splendour to be seen there than in other places, both on account of the number of men which were daily there, and of the furnishing of the rooms which he possessed. Knút the Powerful took taxes and dues from those countries of the northern lands which were richest, but as he received more than other kings, he also gave away more. In all his realm there was such peace that no one dared break it; the inhabitants themselves had peace and ancient land-rights. From this Knút won great renown in all lands" (St. Olaf's Saga, 139).

A king could give to a friend the *title* of king without the power of one.

"King Hring said: 'I would not give her to thee unless it were that I am sick, and I like thee to have her rather than others, for thou art the foremost of all men in Norway; I will also give thee the name of king, for her brothers will not give either her or the honour away to thee like I do.' Fridthjóf answered: 'I thank you much, lord, for your favour, which is greater than I expected, but I do not want more than a jarl's name as a title.'[1] Hring gave Fridthjóf power over the realm he had ruled with hand-fastening (joining of hands) and jarl's name. He was to rule until the sons of Hring were full-grown and could rule the land" (*Fridthjóf's Saga*, c. 14).

"Then Heidrek went about the land, and made it tributary to King Harald of Reidgotaland as it had formerly been, and then returned to the king. He had won very large treasures and a great victory. Harald welcomed him and thanked him with many fine words. A wedding-feast was prepared, and Heidrek married the daughter of the king, who celebrated it with great honour; he gave to Heidrek the name of king and half of his kingdom; he ruled Reidgotaland long after this, and was thought wise and victorious; he had a son by his wife called Angantýr. King Harald also in his old age begot a son called Hálfdán; they were both most promising, and

[1] Nafnbót = addition to the name, improvement of the name.

were thought far above other men in Reidgotaland" (Hervarar Saga, c. 10).

No king could rule over the people or the land without the consent of the *Thing*.[1]

"Some Fylkis-kings summoned a Thing, and Olaf made a speech wherein he asked the bœndr to take him for king over the country, and promised to keep to the old laws and defend the land against foreign chiefs and hosts; he spoke long and well, and was cheered. Then the kings rose one after the other, and all spoke in favour of this to the people. At last the name of king over the whole land was given to Olaf according to the laws of Upplönd"[2] (St. Olaf, Heimskringla, c. 35).

When Olaf had made a long speech to the bœndr—

"The whole crowd of people arose and would hear of nothing but that Olaf Tryggvason should be king; and so he was chosen king at the *Allsherjarthing* (general Thing) over all the country which Harald Fairhair possessed, and the rule given to him according to ancient laws. The bœndr promised to give him many men in order to get the realm, and afterwards to hold it; and he, on the other hand, promised to uphold the laws and rights of the land" (Fornmanna Sögur, 1).

If a king attacked a man, the people of all the Fylkis might gather against him and kill him. The *bœndr*, as soon as a king or jarl had encroached upon the property or violated their domestic peace, were obliged to cut up *herör* (host arrow, war arrow)—if it was a king in every Fylki, if it was a jarl in four, and after such a summons to gather together, attack, and slay or drive the offender away. This legal enactment was undoubtedly of very ancient origin.

"No man shall attack another (with armed men), neither the king, nor any other man. If the king does so, an arrow shall be cut and sent inland through all the Fylkis, and he shall be attacked and slain if taken. If he escapes he shall never come back to the country. Whoever will not attack him, or drops the arrow, shall pay three marks" (Earlier Frostathing's Law, iv., 50).

[1] In the Danish laws the stipulation to be given by the king at his elevation was called Haand-fæstning (hand-fastening).

[2] Cf. also Magnús the Good, c. 22 (Heimskringla).

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SLAVERY—THRALDOM.[1]

Slavery among the Asar—Its early existence in the North—Contempt in which the slave was held—Nationalities of captives in war—Purchase of slaves—Daughters of foreign kings taken as slaves—Slaves considered chattels—Slaves could buy their freedom—Ceremonies attending the attainment of freedom—Relations between the freed slave and his former master—Freedom obtained through bravery in war—Masters empowered to kill slaves—Positions of trust given to slaves—Indemnity payable to masters for injury to slaves—Laws relating to slaves' children—Price of slaves—Laws of purchase.

SLAVERY flourished with the Asar on the shores of the Black Sea, and their slaves seem to have been of foreign birth, as we see from the words of Skirnir, when he comes to ask Gerd in marriage for his master Frey. He thus speaks of himself:—

I am not of Álfar,
Nor of Asa-sons,
Nor of the wise Vanir:
Though alone I came
Through the wavering fire
Your halls to behold.
(Skirnismál, 18.)

Slavery existed in the North from the earliest time, and was probably introduced by the followers of Odin.

Among thrall men, the *thjon* and *bryti* (steward) were the most prominent, and among the thrall women the *seta* and *deigja*, the latter being a kind of housekeeper or forewoman.

"Two are the best bond-women of a man, seta and deigja, and two thralls, thjón and bryti" (Earlier Gulathing's Law, 198).

Though serfdom, a modified form of slavery, existed afterwards in other parts of Europe, the land of the Swedes, Gautar, and Norwegians was never degraded by it; but, alas, it

[1] Thrall was a male slave; ambátt, a female slave.

took root in Denmark, and showed there to what a miserable condition a free people can be gradually brought by not watching over their liberties.

There are in the Sagas numerous examples showing the contempt in which the thrall was held; his mark was closely cropped hair, and his dress was of white vadmal, to distinguish him from the free man.

"Thrand said he had two young thralls to sell him. Rafn answered that he would not buy them before he saw them. Thrand led forward the two boys; their hair was cropped, and they were in white coats (kulf)" (Flateyjarbók, i.).

"Almstein thrall had many children. 'Now I think it is thy kin, Úlf, as Almstein was thy grandfather, but I am Hálfdán's grandson; thy family has got hold of the king's property, as can be seen, by ale-service and other outfittings. Now take here the white kirtle which my grandfather Hálfdán gave thy grandfather Almstein, and therewith take thy family name, and be a thrall henceforth; for it was decided at the Thing, when Hálfdán got a king's name, that thy grandfather should wear the kirtle, and the mother of his children came to the Thing, and all his children put on clothes of the same kind, and all their offspring had to do the same.' Harald had a white kirtle carried before the eyes of Úlf, and sang:—

Knowest thou this kirtle?
Thou hast to pay the Skjöldung a cow,
And a full-grown ox
Thou hast to pay the Skjöldung;
A pig and a fattened goose
Thou hast to pay the Skjöldung;
Children and all which thou earnest
Thou hast to pay the Skjöldung."

(Fornmanna Sögur vi., Harald Hardrádi.)

Captives in war formed the chief supply of slaves, who consequently came from many different countries whither expeditions were made, as Hunaland, Friesland, Valland (France), Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, and other countries on the shores of the Mediterranean.

"When Egil went to Iceland from a journey to England, Norway, and Vermaland, the district (south-western part of Iceland) was all settled; the first settlers were dead, but their sons or grandsons dwelt there. Ketil Gufa had come to Iceland when the land was much settled; he was the first winter at Gufuskalar in Rosmhvalanes; he had come from Ireland across the sea, and had many Irish thralls with him" (Egil's Saga, c. 80).

"Leif (Ingólf's foster-brother) went on warfare in the west; he made war in Ireland, and there found a large underground house; he went into it, and it was dark, until a sword which a man wore made it light. Leif slew him and took the sword and much property; then he was called Hjörleif (Sword-Leif). Hjörleif made war widely in Ireland, and got much booty; he took there ten thralls, Dufthak, Geirröd, Skjaldbjörn, Haldór, Drafdrit; the others are not named" (Landnáma).

Purchases of slaves took place wherever the people traded.

"Thangbrand (a priest) bought a fair Irish maiden; he went home to Brimaborg (Bremen) with Bishop Albertus, and took the maiden with him" (Fornmanna Sögur, i., 81).

"It happened in the beginning of the summer that King Hákon the good went with a ship-host eastward to Brenneyjar to make peace (renew treaties) on behalf of his country according to the laws. This meeting between chiefs (höfdingi)[1] was to take place every third summer, and matters on which the kings (of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden) had to decide were settled there. It was thought a pleasant journey to go to this meeting, for men came there from almost all lands of which we have tidings. Höskuld (an Icelander) launched his ship; he also wanted to go there, for he had not seen the king during the winter, and a fair was held there at the same time. This meeting was very large; there was a great deal of amusement, drinking, and games, and all kinds of merriment. Nothing remarkable happened there. Höskuld met with many of his kinsmen who lived in Denmark. One day when Höskuld walked with some others to amuse himself he saw a splendid tent far from the other booths. He walked there and entered the tent, in which sat a man in clothes of gudvef (a costly stuff), with a Gardariki hat on his head. Höskuld asked for his name. He called himself Gilli, from Gardariki. Höskuld said he had often heard his name mentioned, and that he was the richest of all traders. Höskuld said: 'Thou art likely to have things to sell us which we want to buy.' Gilli asked what they wanted to buy. The followers of Höskuld said that he wanted to buy a bondmaid, if he had any to sell. Gilli said: "You mean to get me into difficulty, when you demand for purchase things which you think I have not got; but it is not sure that I have them not.' Höskuld saw that there was a curtain hanging across the booth; this Gilli lifted, and Höskuld

[1] Here chief is = king. This meeting of kings seems like the meetings in our times of monarchs for alliance or treaties.

saw twelve women sitting inside. Gilli told Höskuld to go to them and see if he liked to buy any of these women. Höskuld did so. They sat all together from wall to wall in the booth. Höskuld looked carefully at them; he saw that one poorly dressed sat next to the edge of the tent; he thought she was beautiful of face as far as he could see. He asked: 'How dear will that woman be, if I want to buy her?' Gilli said: 'Thou must pay for her three marks of silver.' Höskuld said: 'I think thou valuest this bondmaid rather high, for this is the price of three.' Gilli said: 'Thou art right; I value her higher than the others; choose any of those eleven, and pay for her a mark of silver, and let this one be my property.' Höskuld said: 'First I will see how much silver there is in my money-bag (sjód), which I have at my belt.' He asked Gilli to take the scales. Then Gilli said: 'This matter shall be without guile from my side; the woman had a great defect, and I want thee to know it, Höskuld, before we make this bargain.' Höskuld asked what it was. Gilli said: 'She is dumb; I have tried to get her to talk in many ways, but I have never got a word from her; it is certainly my belief that this woman cannot speak.' Then Höskuld said: 'Come with the scales and let us see how much the money-bag which I have here weighs.' Gilli did so; he weighed the silver, and it was three marks. Then Höskuld said: 'Now it has happened that this will be our bargain; take thou this silver, and I will take this woman; I think that thou hast shown thyself generous in this matter, for surely thou didst not want to cheat me.' Then Höskuld went home to his booth. Next morning when people dressed Höskuld said: 'Little liberality is seen on the dress which Gilli the Wealthy has given to thee; it is also true that it was more difficult for him to dress twelve than it is to dress one.' Höskuld then opened a chest and took up a fine woman's dress and gave it her; and all people said that fine clothes suited her. When the chiefs had settled matters according to law, the feast and the meeting ended. Then Höskuld went to find King Hákon, and greeted him honourably, as was fit. The King looked at him and said: 'We should have accepted thy greeting, Höskuld, even hadst thou greeted us a little earlier; but still we will do it now.'

"It occurred one morning when Höskuld went out to look over his farm (bœr), and the weather was fine, and the sun shone and was low above the horizon, that he heard some talking; he went to where a brook flowed in front of the slope of the tun (grass-plot). He there saw two people, and recognised them; it was his son Olaf and his mother (the bondwoman); then he saw that she was not dumb, for she talked

much to the boy. Then Höskuld went to them and asked for her name, and told her it would not do to conceal it longer. She said she would not. They sat down on the slope; then she said: 'If thou wantest to know my name, it is Melkorka.' Höskuld asked her to tell more about her kin. She said: 'My father is named Myrkjartan; he is king in Ireland, and I was taken captive thence fifteen winters old.' Höskuld said she had too long been silent about such good kin. Then Höskuld went in and told Jorun (his wife) about what had happened on his walk. Jorun said she knew not whether she told the truth, and that she did not like uncouth people, and then they left off speaking; Jorun was not friendlier to her than before, but Höskuld somewhat more. A little later, when Jorun went to bed, Melkorka pulled off her shoe-clothes (skóklædi = shoes and stockings) and laid them on the floor. Jorun took the stockings and struck her head with them. Melkorka got angry and struck Jorun's nose with her fist so that blood spurted out. Höskuld came and parted them. Thereafter Höskuld let Melkorka go away, and gave her a bœr in Laxárdal; it has since been called Melkorkustadir, and is now waste; it is south of the Laxá (a river). Melkorka had a household there, to which Höskuld gave all that was needed, and Olaf their son went with her; it was soon seen in Olaf, when he grew up, that he would surpass other men in beauty and good manners" (Laxdæla, c. 12, 13).

"Astrid, Olaf Tryggvason's mother, went with her son, who was then three winters old, on board a trading-ship bound to Gardariki; her brother Sigurd was with King Valdimar there.

"On their voyage eastward Vikings met them; they were Eistr (Esthonians); they took the property and the people and killed some of them, while they divided the others among themselves as slaves. Olaf was parted from his mother, and Klerkon, an Esthonian, took him and Thórólf and Thorgils (two of Astrid's followers). Klerkon thought Thórólf too old for a thrall and unfit for work, and killed him; but took the boys with him and sold them to a man called Klerk, and got for them a very good he-goat. Another man bought Olaf for a good rain-cloak; his name was Reas, that of his wife Rekon, of his son, Rekoni. Olaf stayed there long, and was well kept and liked by the bóndi, and remained six winters in Eistland in this outlawry" (Olaf Tryggvason, c. 5).

Lodin, a Norwegian trader, once was at a market in Eistland.

"There he saw a woman who had been sold as thrall, and when he looked at her he recognised in her Astrid, Eirik's

daughter, the widow of King Tryggvi, and then she was unlike what she had been the last time he saw her. She was pale and lean, and badly dressed. He went to her and asked how it was with her. She answered: 'Heavy is it to tell that. I have been sold into slavery and taken hither for sale.' Then they knew each other, and Astrid also him. She asked him to buy her and take her home to her kinsmen. 'I will,' answered he, 'take thee to Norway if thou wilt marry me.' And because she was then hardly situated, and knew that Lodin was a man of great kin, brave and wealthy, she promised him this to get away. Then Lodin bought Astrid and took her home to Norway, and married her there with the consent of her kinsmen" (Olaf Tryggvason's Saga, Heimskringla, c. 58).

Sigurd, Astrid's brother, came to Eistland to gather taxes for the King of Hólmgard.

"He saw on a market-place a very fine boy, who seemed to him a foreigner, and asked for his name and family. He said he was called Olaf, and his father Tryggvi Olafsson, and his mother Astrid, daughter of Eirik Bjódaskalli. Sigurd recognised in him his sister's son, and asked why he was here. Olaf told him what had happened. Sigurd took him to Reas' bóndi and bought the boys Olaf and Thorgils, and took them to Hólmgard"[1] (Olaf Tryggvason, c. 6).

"One day Olaf was in the market-place, which was crowded. There he recognised Klerkon, who had slain his foster-father Thórólf Lúsaskegg; he had a small axe in his hand, and went up to Klerkon and cut his head down to the brains. Thereupon he at once ran home and told his kinsman Sigurd. Sigurd took him to the room of Queen Allogia (Olga, which is a corruption of the Northern name Helga) with these tidings, and asked her to help the boy. She looked at him, and said, 'Such a handsome boy must not be slain;' and ordered all her men to come thither fully armed. In Hólmgard there was such great *fridhelgi* (peace-holiness), that the law bade that any one who slew another, not condemned, should himself be slain. Therefore the people rushed forward according to their custom and laws to search for Olaf and take his life, as the law bad. It was said that he was in the queen's house, and that there was a fully armed host to defend him. When the king heard this he quickly went thither with his hird, and as he did not want them to fight, first procured a truce, and then a settlement. He adjudged a fine for the murder, which was paid by

[1] Cf. also Heimskringla, c. 58.

the queen. It was the law in Gardariki that there should be no king-born men except with the king's permission. Therefore Sigurd told the queen of what family Olaf was, and also why he had come thither, that he could not remain in his own country on account of the hostility (and persecution) of his enemies. Sigurd asked her to tell this to the king, and beg him to help this king's son, who had been so ill-treated. She did so, and he assented to her request. He therefore took Olaf under his protection, and treated him well, as befitted a king's son. Olaf remained in Gardariki nine winters (years) with King Valdimar. He was handsome, larger and stronger than most others, and in *idrottir* superior to all other Northern men of whom the Sagas tell" (Olaf Tryggvason, Fornmanna Sögur, i., p. 81).

Daughters of foreign kings and other beautiful women who were often prisoners of war were generally made concubines, and called kings' thrall-women, and became bones of contention in the household circle.

"Olaf, King of Sweden, son of Eirik, had a concubine Edla, a daughter of the Jarl of Vindland, who had been taken in war, and was therefore called the king's thrall-woman" (St. Olaf, c. 72).

"Ketil Thrym, a settler (in Iceland), went abroad and was with Vedorm, the son of Vemund the old. He bought from Vedorm, Arneid, daughter of Jarl Asbjörn Skerjablesi, whom Hólmfast, son of Vedorm, had captured when he and Grim, the nephew of Vedorm, killed Asbjörn Jarl in Sudreyjar (Hebrides). Ketil Thrym bought Arneid two parts dearer than Vedorm valued her at first; when the bargain was made he married her" (Landnáma, iv., c. 2).

Thralls, who were considered chattels, and had no personal rett,[1] being regarded as the exclusive property of the master and classed among his *kvikfé* or live goods, could not acquire anything for themselves unless allowed by their owner; but this permission seems to have often been granted, as they generally had property, and even seem to have possessed weapons, of which the master had not the right to arbitrarily deprive them.[2]

[1] Claim, rights, law, atonement for injury, see p. 544. [2] Cf. Gisli Súrsson.

"If cattle damages cattle, horn or hoof or thrall, it shall be paid at half value" (Bjarkey Law, 140).

Those who belonged to rich masters were allowed to work for themselves, and thus acquire means to buy their freedom, and it was more usual for a slave to buy his freedom than to be made free. He either paid the full sum and became a free man at once, or paid part of the sum down and the rest by work for his master.

After this he had personal rett, but had to work one year for his master, without whose consent he could not marry or make bargains; but when he had paid the sum and wished to become free, he made his freedom-ale—a feast with a certain measure of ale—to which he had to invite his master and his wife, and seat them in the high-seat.

On the first evening of the feast he had to pay the price of his freedom, namely 6 aurar, to the master, which he could give up or not. Then he became *leysingi* (freedman) and could marry and make bargains not exceeding a certain amount.

Even after the freedom-ale there was a special relation between the freedman and his former master and his descendants, which was called, on the side of the master, *vörn* (defence), on that of the freedman *thyrmsl* (obligation, dependence); these terms meant that the master protected the freedman, and that the latter was dependent on the former. The freedman was not by birth a member of any family that could help him, so "his former master had to do that duty."

The master had to take care of his freedman if he became a pauper; if the latter went against his former master in anything, whether in law or in enmity, he became his thrall again.

The master and his descendant took the inheritance after their freedman or his descendant, if he had no free kinsmen within a certain degree. This custom varied in different parts of the country; according to the Frostathing's Law, it was the fourth degree.[1]

"The family of a leysingi is four men in thyrmsl, but the fifth (degree) is no more in it, though not bought free" (Frostath., ix. 11).

[1] Gulath., 66, 106, 296.

"If a man wishes to buy himself off thyrmsl and dependence, rather than make his freedom-ale, it shall be so if his master will pledge his faith in granting it, and then it shall never be broken" (Frostath., ix. 16).

"If a leysingi wishes to have the power of bargains and marriage, he shall make his freedom-ale, with at least 3 *sáld* (measures) of ale, and invite his master to it, with witnesses, and seat him in the *öndvegi*, and lay 6 aurar in balances the first evening, and offer him the sum of a leysingi.[1] If he receives it, it is well; if he gives it up, it is as if it were paid" (Gulathing's Law, 62).

"If a thrall gets land or lives (for himself), he shall make his freedom-ale with 9 mœlirs (measures) of ale, and kill a ram, and a family-born man[2] shall cut off its head, and his master shall take the neck-band[3] from his neck. If his master allows him to make his freedom-ale, he shall ask his leave to make it with two witnesses, and invite him, with four others, to the feast which is his freedom-ale" (Frostathing's Law, ix. 12).

Though a slave had been made free, he could not leave the *fylki* without permission.

"If a freedman leaves the fylki without the permission of his master, and obtains for himself property, his lord should go after him with witnesses. If he is willing to return, all is well; if not, his lord may by the witnesses prove that he is his freedman, and bring him back to his old place, bound or not, as he chooses, and seat him where he sat before" (Gulathing's Law, 67).

"When a thrall or bondmaid pays his sum of redemption they shall be taken to the church, a book laid on their heads, and freedom given to them. They shall work a twelvemonth (xii manad) for their master" (Gulath., 61).

Slaves and freedmen who had made their freedom-ale were limited in their bargains.

"A pauper must not make or have power over any bargain. Nor must a thrall, except only about his knife. Also a freedman who has not made his freedom-ale must not make a bargain higher than an '*ortug*'" (Gulath., 56).

A thrall who proved that he had for twenty years lived and acted as a free man without any one during that time having

[1] The redemption-sum of a leysingi.
[2] Hereditary freeman.
[3] This means, to take the slavery off.

made any objection thereto, was, according to law, a free man, even if no freedom-ale or formal liberation had taken place.

"If a thrall goes about like a free man for 20 winters or more and no one hurts him or his bargains or his marriage out of the fylki or in the fylki, then he is free if he wants to be called free" (Gulath., 61).

In order to replenish the waste of war, we find that thralls were allowed to follow their masters on expeditions, and that they could win their liberty by bravery.

"If they meet a host and fight, and a thrall slays a man, then he is free, though he was a thrall before" (Gulathing's Law, 312).

"A bondi is not allowed to send his paid servant into a levy instead of himself, unless the steersman (of the ship) consents to it; for, if a servant comes from the harbour for the bondi, he shall redeem himself from flogging. If a thrall comes in a levy instead of his master, the king may take him if he wants to, or pronounce him free in relation to every man" (Jutland Law, iii. 2).

Sometimes thralls were rewarded by their masters for meritorious actions. Vebjörn and his brothers went to Iceland, but in a heavy storm their ship was wrecked on some rocks, and they got ashore.

"There they were entertained during the winter by Atli, Geirmund Heljarskinn's thrall. When his master got the news of this, he asked why he had taken care of Vebjörn and his companions. The thrall replied: 'I wanted to show thus what a great and splendid chief the man was who owned a thrall that dared to undertake such things.' Geirmund thanked him for his deed, and as a reward gave him his liberty, and land to settle on" (Sturlunga, Part i., ch. 3).

"Every man who is free and able shall own shield, spear, and cutting weapons. Only in cases of extreme necessity, where a general rising of the people takes place, the thrall goes out armed like the free men" (Gulathing's Law, ch. 312).

Any one who captured a runaway slave and brought him back to his master could ask a reward according to the distance at which the slave was found or captured.

"If a man's thrall runs away and another gets hold of him

inside the fylki and outside the quarter (of the fylki), he shall have one eyrir. If he capture him outside the fylki but inside our law district, he shall get two aurar. If he captures him in the country and out of our law district, he gets half a mark. If he brings him home in chains the owner has to redeem him, but not otherwise" (Gulath., 68).

Without being held responsible, a master could kill or maim his thrall; only in the former case he had to publicly announce the slaying on the day it was done.

"If a man beats his thrall to death, he shall tell it to men the same day. Then he is not answerable to any one but God. But if he does not this, he is a murderer"[1] (Earlier Frostathing's Law, v. 20).

The slaying of another man's thrall was paid for by an indemnity of twelve aurar.

"It was the law at that time that if a man slew the thrall of another, the slayer should carry home indemnity therefor to the owner, before the third rising of the sun after the deed. This indemnity was twelve aurar of silver; and if it was paid according to this law, no suit could be commenced for the slaying of the thrall"[2] (Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 43).

"Steinar summoned Thorstein for thrall-killing, and claimed that the slaying of each be punishable by *fjorbaugsgard* (lesser outlawry); this was the law if a man's thralls were killed, and the indemnity was not paid up before the third sunrise after. Two cases of lesser outlawry[3] were to count the same as one of full outlawry" (Egil's Saga, c. 85).

Thralls were given duties and positions of trust. King Aun's thrall, Tunni, as we have seen, became the King's adviser, and became so powerful that he rebelled against his own master.

"Erling Skjálgsson said to King Olaf: 'To this I will quickly reply, that I deny reproaching Aslak or others for being in your service; but I acknowledge that now, as heretofore, each one of us kinsmen wants to be above the others. I will also confess that I willingly submit to thee, King Olaf,

[1] Cf. also p. 7.
[2] Cf. also Njala, c. 36.
[3] A man convicted of the lesser outlawry by paying a fine of one mark within a fixed period was safe within a certain space. If he neglected such payment he became a full outlaw.

but it will be hard for me to bow before Selthorir, who is thrall-born in all his kindred,[1] though he is now your *árman* (tax-gatherer)"[2] (St. Olaf's, c. 122).

The chief Thorolf Skjalg was a great friend of the wife of the bondi Lodin. Lodin was slain at night, it was not known by whom, and Thorolf took the widow home.

"He wanted to make the sons of Lodin thralls, and succeeded in making a thrall of Rögnvald, but not of Ulf, who was sold as a thrall into far-off countries. . . . Thorolf had Rögnvald among his thralls, and when he was grown up he placed him over other thralls to command them and keep them at work" (Fornmanna Sögur, c. 145).

If any harm was done to thralls, the master took payment in the same manner as he did for harm done to his cattle, horse, &c. In two cases only did the thrall himself take payment—when offended by another thrall, or when at the Thing, church, or feast with his master; in the first case taking all the payment, in the last one-twelfth.

"A hauld shall get 3 aurar (as rett) on the behalf of his *bryti* and *thjon*, and *deigja* and *seta;* and 2 aurar for all other slaves. A thrall's rett shall be two-thirds less than his master's. If a thrall beats another thrall this shall be paid, but the master owns it not" (Frostath., xi. 21).

"If a man's thrall follows him to church, or to a feast, or to a Thing, then he is holy where the ships land or stand. If a man beats him in either place, a fine in silver shall be paid to the king" (Frostath., 61).

The child of a free woman by a thrall was free, and belonged to the family of the mother.

The child of a thrall woman by a free man was a slave, and belonged to the master of the mother, unless the father publicly declared it to be his own, and it gained liberty before it was three nights old.[3]

The price of thralls varied somewhat, and in Egil's Saga we have mention of a thrall for whom three marks in silver were paid, or twice as much as the average; they were generally sold at two and three marks; a common thrall woman

[1] Father's and mother's side.
[2] Cf. also Laxdæla Saga, 12, 13.
[3] Gulathing's Law, 57.

being usually sold for one mark. The Swedes and Danes considered three marks as the average value of a thrall.[1]

"Steinar saw a thrall called Thrand, one of the strongest of men. Steinar wished to purchase him and offered a high price; but his owner charged three marks of silver for him, and valued him twice as much as a common thrall. And that was their bargain" (Egil's Saga, c. 84).

"The wergild of a Gotlandman is three marks of gold if he is slain. The wergild of every other man is ten marks of silver, except that of a thrall, which is 4½ marks of penning (money)" (Gotland Law, i. 15).

A thrall could not be sold out of the country unless he was a criminal.

"No man is allowed to sell a thrall or thrall-woman out of the country, unless he is known to be a criminal; but if he does so, he must pay the king three marks" (Earlier Frostathing's Law, 20).

When a slave was sold the seller had to tell the defects, if any, in regard to his body or health.

"If a man buys a thrall from another, the seller shall be answerable as to stitches[2] and epilepsy for the nine next years" (Frostath., v. 3).

Thralls were used to do the killing for their masters—in a word, to commit murder for them—and to expose children.[3]

"Kári in Iceland quarrelled with Karli about an ox. Kári thereupon persuaded his thrall to slay Karli. The thrall feigned to have gone mad, and ran south across Hraun. Karli sat on his threshold. The thrall struck him a death-blow. Kári killed the thrall" (Landnáma, ii.).

Even with thraldom a master had his retinue of fixed male and female free servants in his household. These were called house-folk. Workmen and labouring men were also engaged on estates.

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[1] Ostgöta Law, 6, § 2; Vestgöta Law, i. 22; Gotland Law, i. 28, § 6.

[2] In the side.

[3] See chapter on Exposure of Children. Vol. ii. p. 42.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE THING.

The people in assembly—Different assemblies—The general assembly—Local assemblies—Analogy of the United States—Retinues of Thingmen—Attendance at the Thing—The summons—Place of assembly—Its sanctity—Breach of the peace at a Thing a sacrilege—Laws regulating judgments of the Thing—Appeals—Common law of the towns—Confirmation of resolutions passed at the Thing—Amusements between the sessions—Accommodation of members—Assemblies in Iceland—Jurymen.

FROM the most ancient times we find that the people in assembly, called *Thing*, exercised their judicial and legislative power. There they deliberated, not only on the questions concerning their small communities, but also on the internal or external affairs of the whole country. There were smaller and larger Things, classified under the different names of *Thing*, *Mót*, and *Hús-thing*, the latter being a private meeting to which the chief summoned his own men.

In order to preserve freedom of deliberation and the individual liberty of each person who came, the most stringent laws and regulations were laid down.

"With laws shall our land be built, and not be laid waste by lawlessness. But he who will not allow others the laws shall not enjoy them himself" (Frostath., i. 6).

The *Herad-things* were apparently held very often, and were only attended by the people belonging to the Herad; every one who wished a question to be settled, and required a Thing, had the right to summon one.[1]

There were general Things, or *Fylkis-things*, in which several herads were represented, under the leadership of the hersir or king.

Every Herad was independent of the Fylki in its local

[1] Earlier Gulathing's Law, 131.

affairs, and every Fylki was independent one from the other, each having self-government. When the affairs of the country required the presence of all the people, then the bœndr of the Herads and Fylki met together at a general Thing called *Allsherjar-thing* (Thing of all the hosts), and all had to abide by the decision taken. In fact the country was a union of states bound together for mutual protection; but they felt that a general government was not able in all things to attend to the affairs of each Herad or Fylki, and could not know the wants of the people, as the majority of those who would have had the management of affairs lived far from them, and many had never seen other Herads or Fylki than their own. The nearest approach to this ancient form of government is that of the United States.

When we say that the Thing was the assembly of the people, we must qualify the expression, for only bœndr (or free men) who owned land had a voice in the deliberations. The sons and other relations of these bœndr, or free men, who did not own land had no voice whatever in the affairs of the country. The Thingmen were followed by a more or less large retinue, according to their rank or wealth.

All the bœndr of the Herad were bound to appear at the Herads-thing on pain of fine, unless a bondi had such a small farm as to be *einvirki* (sole worker). These latter were not obliged to appear at any other Thing than (1) *Konungs-thing*, i.e. a *Thing* summoned by the king himself; (2) *Manndráps-thing*, i.e. a *Thing* in consequence of a murder; (3) *Manntals-thing*, i.e. a *Thing* for the equalization of the tax; and (4) *Vápna-thing*, i.e. a *Thing* to examine if every man possessed the weapons prescribed by law. All members of the Thing according to law had an equal vote.

The summons was by sending out a *Thingbod* (Thing-summons), or, in case of murder, an *ör* (arrow) throughout the whole Thing-district; the summons or arrow was sent from farm to farm, and called upon all Thing-men to meet at the usual Thing-place, generally the fifth day after the issue of the summons.

"Every man who thinks a Thing necessary may have one. Every man shall carry the summons and not drop it. It shall

go between the winter-houses and not between the sœters. The Thing-summons shall delay nowhere in weather fit for travelling except in night-quarters, and not unless there is necessity. If a man drops the summons he is liable to pay three *aurar*. . . . The man who carries a summons shall cut three notches on the doorpost or door . . . and put the summons over the lintel. All bœndr shall go to the Thing when the summons comes to their house except single-workers. They shall go only to three Things—a Thing for murder, a Thing for choosing a king, a man-reckoning (census) Thing. During all other Things they shall sit at home. . . A *widow* and a disabled bondi shall not go to the Thing against their will. All other bœndr shall go to the Thing when the summons comes to their house, or pay a Thing-fine" (Earlier Gulathing's Law, 131).

The Thing was held in an open place called *Thingvöll* (*Thing-plain*), in earlier times near a temple.[1] On the Thingvöll, or near it, there always seems to have been a *Thing-brekka*, or Thing-hill, from which all announcements were made.

The Thing-plain was a sacred place, which must not be sullied by bloodshed arising from blood-feud (*heiptarblóð*) or any other impurity. The Thing, from the time it was opened until it was dissolved, was during pagan times under the protection of the gods. It was opened with certain religious ceremonies, which included a solemn peace declaration (*grida setning*) over the assembly, which in earlier times was pronounced by the Hersir near whose temple the Thing took place. Every breach of the peace at a Thing was a sacrilege which put the guilty one out of the pale of the law—he was like the violator of the temple peace—a *varg í veum* (wolf in the sanctuary), an outlaw in all holy or inhabited places, and an *útlagi* (outlaw) for all until he had made reparation for his crime.

A struggle having arisen between the godi Thorstein and his followers and some descendants of a chief Kjallak who had announced their intention not to respect the sanctity of the Thing and proceeded to act in defiance of the remonstrances of Thorstein, recourse was had to arbitration, and Thord Gellir was appointed arbitrator.

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[1] After the introduction of Christianity, near a church.

"No peace was made between them, for neither would have it. The plain on which they fought was covered with blood, and also the place where the Thornes-thing stood during the fight . . . ."

"He began the arbitration by saying that both parties should be content with their lot, that neither slain men nor wounds should be paid for, and that the plain was spoiled by the blood of hate which had come down on it and was no longer holier than other ground. Those who attacked first had caused this which was the only breaking of peace. He said that no Thing should thereafter be held there"[1] (Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 9, 10).

On the journey to and from the Thing, and during its duration, all the men were peace-holy.

"All men named for Gulathing journey shall be at peace with each other until they come back to their homes. If any one breaks the peace and wounds or maims a man, he has forfeited loose property and peace in the land, and shall never come to the country" (N. G. L., ii. 16).[2]

The punishment given to those who did not heed the judgment given at a law-thing, and confirmed by weapon-taking, was a fine.

"If a man breaks the judgment given at a law-thing, and confirmed by *vápnatak* inside and outside the law-court, then he is to pay the king four marks of silver, and one mark to the plaintiff" (N. G. L., ii. 17).

"If a man has been fined for breaking a judgment once, and persists in disregarding it, then the king's stewards shall summon him to a Thing and outlaw him unless he pays what is then due. A man is liable to the same if he breaks the judgment given at the Frostathing, and confirmed by *vápnatak* inside and outside the law-court" (Earlier Frostathing's Law, v. 46).

In Iceland Things were held regularly twice a year, namely, before and after the Althing (Thing for the whole land). The one taking place in the springtime lasted at least four days, or at most a week.[3] The other, called *Leid*, at the end of summer, lasted not more than two days.

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[1] Cfr. also Frostathing's Law, i. 2.
[2] Laws by King Magnus, A.D. 1263–1280.
[3] Grágás, 56.

"We (the people) shall have *Leid* (autumn-thing), and those godis who hold a Thing together shall have *Leid* together. . . . . The *Leid* shall not be held before fourteen nights after the Althing. No *Leid* shall last less than one day, or longer than two nights" (Gragas (1852), iii. § 61).

The country was divided into four quarters, and each of these into three Thing-districts, except the northern quarter, which was divided into four.[1] Every Thing-district was divided into three parts, each of which was ruled by a godi who was temple-priest. At the Quarter-thing all the bœndr of the quarter assisted.[2]

The Althing, which was held once a year, took place between the two other Things. This was natural, as at the Spring-thing they prepared for the Althing, and at the Thing held at the end of summer it was usual to make known what had taken place at the Althing.

"The Althing was placed where it is now, according to the advice of Úlfljót and all the men of the land. Before this the Thing was at Kjalarnes, established by Thorstein, son of Ingolf, the (first) settler, and father of Thorkel Máni (moon), lawman, and other chiefs" (Islendingabók, c. 3).

The appeal of a cause from a lower Thing to the higher one was expressed in the Gulathing's Law, which probably had the greatest authority over the larger part of the country; every dispute had first to be treated at the smaller Thing of the *Herad,* and only when it could not be satisfactorily settled there was it to go before the *Fylkisthing.* A Thing from two Fylki had less power than one of four, and one from four less than one from eight.

"In every case when all the men of the Fylki agree, no lawful judgment of theirs in matters about which they have right to judge shall be broken, though kinsmen on the male or female side or near relatives do not come. But if one-fourth or more of the right Thingmen do not come, a new Thing shall be summoned from two Fylkis for the case. . . . If they do not agree at the Thing of two Fylkis, it shall be sent to a Thing of three Fylkis. If they do not agree, a Thing of four Fylkis. If they do not agree, a Thing of eight Fylkis; that which is

[1] Islendingabók, c. 5. [2] Eyrbyggja, c. 10; Landnáma, ii. c. 12.

agreed upon by all there and brought into the law-court shall stand" (Frostath., x. 30).

To this Thing as well as to lesser Things, every bondi who was a working man had to come. In later times, if the king was not present, his representatives the lendir men were bound to be there. Among these lesser Things were those which dealt with questions relating to paupers.

"It is customary in Iceland for the bœndr to have a Thing in the autumn in order to deal with the poor; the one first named among the poor was Thorljót, the father of Thjódolf" (Flateyjarbók, iii. 421).

In the course of time and towards the latter part of the pagan era there arose from the Herad towns proper (*kaupstad* = trading-places), and the people formed a separate class whose interests were not identical with those of the bondi, and who required a special government and Thing. The common law of the towns is known under the name of *Bjarkeyjar-rétt* (town law). Each town had its *mót*, formed by all householders (*húsfastir*).

There were also meetings of people of the *Hrepp*, which was a tract of country consisting of at least 20 bœndr, who were able to give pay to Thingmen. Their meetings were ordinary or extraordinary. For extraordinary meetings they had to send the cross (or in early times the war-arrow) around. At the meeting the affairs of the poor and other burdens of the community, and the regulations concerning order, were settled. Five men were chosen, who were the representatives or executive power of the community. These men had not necessarily to be landowners. Their duty was to prosecute vagabonds or criminals, and to be present at oath-taking.

"There shall be lawful Hrepps in this country (Iceland). It is lawful when 20 bœndr or more are in it. If the lögréttu-men (law-court men) allow it there may be fewer (bœndr) . . . . Five landowners (bœndr) shall be chosen in every Hrepp to prosecute all those who do not fulfil their duties in the Hrepp, and also to divide the tithes and food-gifts (to the poor), or see to the keeping of oaths taken by men. They need not be landowners if all the men of the Hrepp agree. . . . If a pauper

is unlawfully brought into the Hrepp, the man to whom he is sent shall cut a cross if he thinks he needs a Hrepp-meeting, and carry it to the next house, and there appoint a Hrepp-meeting within seven nights or more, and tell the others to carry the cross. Then each of them shall have it carried as directed by the man who cut it, and it shall be sent in all directions" (Grágás, p. 171, § 234).

The resolutions taken at the Thing were finally confirmed by the *vápnatak* (weapon-taking), for, as we know, the thingmen during the deliberations put away their weapons, and by again taking them up and shaking them they declared matters settled and the Thing dissolved.

"King Sverri summoned the people to *Eyrathing*[1] in Thrándheim, and named twelve men from each Fylki of the eight which are on that side of Agdanes. When they came, the name of king was given to Sverri at this Thing of eight Fylkis, and it was done with weapon-taking, and the people of the land took oaths to him, according to the old laws of the land" (Fornmanna Sögur, viii. 41).

Sigurd Slembidjakn, who pretended to be the son of Magnus Bare-foot, murdered Harald Gilli of Norway in his bed at night, and then asked the people to take him as king.

"Many from the king's house came down to the piers, and all answered, as with one mouth, declaring it should never be that they would yield homage and service to a man who had murdered his brother; 'for if he was not thy brother, thou art not born to be king.' They clashed their weapons together, and declared them all to be outlawed and peaceless. Then the king's horn was blown, and all the lendirmen and hirdmen were gathered" (Harald Gilli's Saga, c. 18).

Between the sessions of the Thing amusements took place, among them that of saga-telling; and the people who attended were often finely dressed.

"Thormod the scald wondered that no man was in the booth, as many were there when he fell asleep. Fifl-Egil entered and said: 'Too far art thou now from great fun.' Thormod answered: 'Where wast thou, or what is the fun?' Egil answered: 'I was in the booth of Thorgrim Trölli, and a

[1] A Thing held on the plain.

great part of the Thing-assembly is there.' Thormod asked: 'What is their amusement?' Egil answered: 'Thorgrim Einarsson is telling a saga.' Thormod asked: 'Of whom is he telling a saga?' Egil answered: 'I know not about whom the saga is, but I know that he tells it well and entertainingly; he sits on a chair outside the booth, and the people sit round and listen to the saga.' Thormod said: 'Thou must be able to name some man mentioned in the saga, especially as thou sayest it is so entertaining.' Egil answered: 'One Thorgeir, a great champion, was mentioned in the saga as having fought very well, as is likely. I should like thee to go and listen to the saga.' Thormod answered: 'I can do it,' and rose"[1] (Fostbrœdra Saga, c. 32).

"The sons of Hjalti made an arvel after the death of their father. They were summoned to the Thorskafjardar-thing. When they came to the Thing they were so well dressed that people thought the Ásar had come" (Landnáma, iii. c. 10).

As the people often came from a long distance, there were erected near the Thing-place Thing-booths for their accommodation, some of which were very large.

Thorstein had slain the thrall of a neighbour, and therefore was summoned to the Thing.

"Thorstein, son of Egil (Skallagrimsson), had very many men with him at the spring Thing, and went there one night earlier than the others, and he and his Thingmen tented their booths.[2] When they had made their own booths ready, Thorstein bade his Thingmen go and raise large booth-walls; then he had a much larger booth than the others, in which there were no men" (Egil's Saga, c. 85).

In Iceland we find the *kvid* (a law term which may mean both the witnesses and the jury). The men who were in the *kvid* did not need to be eye-witnesses; but had to be men who were impartial, and who could form the best judgment from the circumstances of the case. They had to give a verdict under oath. The number of the men of the *kvid*, and the manner of choosing them, varied according to the matter to be considered. In some important cases, recourse was had to the *Tylftarkvid* (a body of twelve men) summoned at the instance of the

[1] The Saga was about Thorgeir Hávarsson, *Thormod's foster-brother*, and his last fight, in which Thorgrim had fought against him. Thormod cleft Thorgrim's head with his axe as he sat on the chair, and escaped.

[2] Pitched a tent over the walls which remained standing.

plaintiff by the godi of the district, who with him named or chose eleven of his Thingmen.

The second kind of *kvid* was *Búakvid* (bondi kvid), which was used in cases of murder and other crimes, consisting of five or nine neighbours chosen by the plaintiff.

The third kind or Bjargkvid (sàving kvid) consisted of five men, also chosen by the plaintiff and of the same place. The defendant had the right to challenge jurors out of the *kvid*, but only for lawful reasons, and the places had to be filled up. If the *kvid* after deliberation could not agree, the majority ruled; and if in the *Tylftarkvid* the votes were equal, the godi had the casting vote; but the verdict was nevertheless to be given unanimously, though the minority were not responsible if the verdict was found to be wrong.

In the earliest times the same practice seems to have held in Norway, till Christianity coming in brought with it the purification oath.

Men could be turned out of the jury if they were not bœndr.

In a law case at the Althing after the burning of Njál, Eyjólf Bölverksson, a man skilled in law, said the following with regard to the jury or *kvid:*

"'I name witnesses to this that I take these two men out of the *kvid*, and name them both, because they are booth-sitting men (less than bœndr) and not bœndr.' Mörd went to the court and said: 'I name witnesses to this that I make void the lawful challenging of Eyjólf Bölverksson, because he challenged men out of the *kvid* who are rightly in it. Every man who owns three hundreds[1] in land or more, though he has no milch cattle, has the right to be in a jury of bœndr, as also he who has milch cattle, though he is a tenant.' He had the witnesses before the court, went to where the bœndr (of the jury) were and told them to sit down, and that they had a right to be in the kvid. Then there was a great uproar, and all said that the case of Flosi and Eyjólf was made perfectly void" (Njala, c. 142).

It seems that it was usual to have twelve judges to decide important cases.

"Thereafter King Heidrek went home with his queen and

[1] The term "hundreds" means some value, perhaps of vadmal or of silver.

they loved each other well; he left off all warfare and made laws in the land; he chose twelve of the wisest men to judge in important cases in his realm, and prevented all warfare in his land; he became a great chief and was well liked" (Hervarar Saga, c. 14).

Gunnar, when attacked, slew Thorgeir Otkelsson, and was summoned before the Thing to answer for it.

"Many chiefs tried to effect a reconciliation, and the result was that twelve men were to arbitrate in the case" (Njala, c. 74).

King Olaf, of Sweden, always had with him twelve of the wisest men, who assisted him in difficult cases.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE GODI AND THE GODISHIP.

Power and functions of the godi or temple-priest—The leaders at sacrifices and spiritual rulers in the earliest times—The law only above the godi—He is the administrator of the law among the Thingmen—The post hereditary—Ceremony attending the assumption of office—The godi's office transferable—Appearance of the godi—Their attendance at the Althing compulsory—The weapon-thing—Sanctity of the law-courts.

THE power and functions of the godi, or temple-priest, whose name has been mentioned in the chapter on Religion, were probably the same in Norway as in Sweden or Denmark before the time of Harald Fairhair of Norway, Gorm of Denmark, and Eirik of Sweden. In the earliest times the godis, whose office was called *godord* (godiship), were the leaders at sacrifices and spiritual rulers of the people, and their descendants united both the spiritual and temporal power.

The original number of holders of the godiship in Iceland was thirty-nine, but in the year 1004 twelve new members were added.

The position of the godi among the Thingmen was of a special nature, and was grounded on birth or privilege, such as purchase; the only thing above him was the law, which was in the keeping of all the godis of the country. He had to see that the law was carried out among the Thingmen, and had to help his own Thingmen when they had a case against a Thingman of another district.[1]

The temple-priest as such had certain revenues; he had, besides, a share of the pay given to the Thingmen by the bœndr who did not go to the Thing; parts of certain fines and forfeited property, and fees for certain legal formalities which could only be performed by him.[2] He was named by the

[1] Twenty feet of vadmal were paid yearly by each bondi who did not go to the Thing to those who went to the Althing (Grágás, 77, 107).

[2] Grágás, 23, 49, 51, 62, 67.

district or by the family, and the bœndr[1] under a certain godi were called the Thingmen of the godi.

The *godord* was looked upon as property; it was inherited, and could be given away, sold, or forfeited. If the godi forfeited the godiship, then the men of the *Thridjung-district*[2] to which the godiship belonged had to elect another; and also, when the heir was not of age, they could elect a provisional godi. The heir to a godiship would become godi, if the bœndr allowed him, at the age of twelve. If the heir was a woman, she could give the godiship to whichever man of the district she preferred.

When a man became a godi he killed a ram and dipped his hands in its blood.

"Höskuld said: 'Let us redden ourselves in the blood of the godi according to ancient custom.' He killed a ram, reddened his hands in its blood, and declared Arnstein's godiship to be his. . . ." (Ljosvetninga Saga, c. 4).

If the godi broke the law he was prosecuted like another man, consequently there was a check upon his powers, and he had to take great care that law and justice were properly executed.

"The men of the *Thridjung-district* always have power over the godiship when the godi is outlawed and loses it. They shall draw lots among themselves. If a man has bought a godiship, or it has been given to him, then it shall be inherited (by his heirs). . . . If the godi becomes sick, he has the right to sell the godiship. If he dies and leaves a son 12 winters old he gets it (the godiship) if the people allow it. If a woman is heiress she shall sell the godiship to some man of the district. If the godi dies before *einmanud*[3] they shall draw lots and have a meeting as to who shall get the godiship; crosses[4] shall be cut and sent in all directions. If he dies after *einmanud* they (the people) shall come one night before others to the Spring-thing and draw lots who shall be godi. If he dies towards the Althing (time), or on the way to the Thing, then his nearest kinsman at the Althing shall be godi. If

[1] Every bondi had to belong to some Thing.

[2] The country was parcelled out into Thing-districts, each being presided over by three godis, hence the word *Thridjung-district*.

[3] Einmanud, last month of winter.

[4] It is probable that this sign was the svastica, used in Iceland instead of the arrow used in Norway. (See p. 520.)

there is no kinsman his Thingmen[1] shall decide who is to be godi, and must come to their decision before the courts (are formed). If there are cases at the Spring-thing the godi is liable to lesser outlawry if he has not arrived at the beginning of the Thing" (Grágás (1852), p. 142).

If the godi for one reason or another could not rule over his district, he could give it to whomsoever he liked within the district; though the office could be owned by more than one, it could only be *represented* by one man.

"Hrafnkel sat on his farm (*bu*) and continued to be honoured. He died and his mound is in Hrafnkelsdal outside Adalbol. Much property, all his war-dress, and his good spear were *mound-laid* with him. His sons assumed his rule. Thorir lived in Hrafnkelsstadir and Asbjörn at Adalbol. They both owned the godiship and were thought to be powerful men" (Hrafnkel Freysgodi's Saga).

If there were several owners, and the power had only been given to one of them, it went by turns one year at a time.

"Helgi Asbjarnarson lived at Oddsstadir near Hafrsá; he was godord-man (godi); he was married to Droplaug, daughter of Spakbessi. They had many children. Hrafnkel, the first cousin of Helgi, lived at Hafrsá and was young. He and Helgi both had the same godord (godiship) and Helgi wielded the godiship.

"Hrafnkel claimed the godiship from Helgi Asbjarnarson, his kinsman, and did not get it.

"In the spring people went to the Spring-thing. Helgi Asbjarnarson then named An Trud into the court (dóm), though it was to be concealed, for An had given to Helgi seven stud horses. When An was seated in the court Helgi put on his head a felt-hood to disguise him and asked him to speak little. Thereupon Hrafnkel with the sons of Droplaug and many men walked up to the court. Helgi Droplaugarson walked up to the seat of An Trud in the court; he jerked up the felt-hood with the guards of his sword and struck it down and asked who sat there. An told his name. Helgi said: 'Who named thee into the court on the behalf of his godiship?' He answered: 'Helgi Asbjarnarson did it.' Helgi Droplaugarson

[1] Thingmen of his district.

then asked Hrafnkel to name witnesses and claim that Helgi Asbjarnarson had forfeited the godiship; he said all his cases were made void as he had named An into the court. Then there was great pressing forward and a fight nearly ensued, but Hólmstein intervened and tried to reconcile them. The agreement was that Hrafnkel should have the godiship as long as Helgi had had it before, and thereupon they should have it both together; Helgi should, however, help Hrafnkel in all cases at Things and meetings of men and wherever needed. Helgi Droplaugarson said to Hrafnkel: 'Now it seems to me I have helped thee.' He answered that it was so. Then people rode home from the Thing" (Droplaugarsona Saga).

The godis seem to have worn long beards, which apparently was the custom among rulers, for Edward is represented on the Bayeux tapestry with a beard.

"Rolf was a great chief and a most powerful man; he had to keep the temple of Thor on that island (Mostr), and was a great friend of Thor, on which account he was called Thorolf. He was tall and strong, fair of face, and had a large beard, wherefore he was called Mostrarskegg; he was the most prominent man on the island" (Eyrbyggja Saga, c. 3).

When the heir to the godiship was a minor, the fittest Thingman took the office till he came of age.

"It was law at that time that when the heirs were minors the Thingman who was thought the fittest should keep the godiship (until they were of age)" (Vatnsdæla, c. 41, 42).

The men of Vatnsdal had a meeting at Karnsá about the godiship.

"They spoke about the godiship and did not agree; every one of them wished to become godi. Then they laid lots in a cloak-skirt, and the lot of Thorkel Silfri (a chief) always came first, for he was skilled in witchcraft. Thorgrím (a kinsman of the deceased godi) walked out and met Thorkel Krafla (his own illegitimate son) in the entrance with other boys. Thorgrím said: 'Now I want thee to pay the price for the axe.' Thorkel answered: 'I should like very much to have the axe, and can easily pay its price now, though I have not the ware thou likest.' Thorgrím said: 'Other things than ware will be taken.' Thorkel asked: 'Dost thou want

me to slay Silfri?' 'Yes,' answered Thorgrím. The lot of the godiship had then been drawn by Silfri. Thorkel walked into the room, and so near Silfri that he touched his foot; Silfri pushed him away and called him the son of a bond-maid. Thorkel jumped up on the next seat and struck his head with the axe (*taparöx*); Silfri at once died, and Thorkel said the axe was not too dear. Thorgrím said the boy had been badly tempted, and did not stand it well, but had shown himself to be a kinsman of the Vatnsdælir (by his bravery), and he would acknowledge that he was his son. Thereupon Thorgrím got the godiship, and was called the godi of Karnsá" (Vatnsdæla, c. 41, 42).

"The godi if he likes shall go upon the Thing-slope at the Spring-thing and name witnesses that he asks all Thingmen of his district (thridjung) to go to the Althing, and they shall decide it with lots or in other ways. Every ninth of his Thingmen shall go. The Spring-thing shall be dissolved at mid-day when men have been four nights at it, but not before, unless all the Thingmen agree otherwise and all cases brought before it are decided" (Grágás, i. 116).

Every Thing-district had a fixed Thing called Herad-thing, which was presided over by the three godis of the Thing-district.

The godi in whose district the Thing-place lay declared the Thing holy; if the Thingman could not come himself, he could send a freeman of his house in his place.

"We shall have a Spring-thing in our country. Three godis shall have one together. They shall not hold a Thing for longer than one week, nor for less than three nights, unless they are allowed by the *Lögrétta*.[1] . . . The godi who owns *Thinghelgi* (declaration of thing-peace) there shall declare the Thing holy the first evening when they come there. . . . The godi shall decide what are the Thing-boundaries, and he shall declare it holy, as at the Althing, and declare what is its name"[2] (Grágás, p. 96, § 56).

A Thingman could declare himself the Thingman of another godi. Every godi had to have a booth on the plain, large enough to hold all his Thingmen; but the great bœndr often had with them their own booths, and their friends, women, children, and servants, &c. The godi who declared the

[1] The high court of justice composed of 48 Godars, also held in the sacred precincts inside of the *vebönd*. See p. 534–538.

[2] Each district has its name, e.g., Kjalnesinga district.

Althing holy was called *allsherjar godi* (the godi of the whole host).

We see that in Iceland at first the *Kjalnesinga godi* had the high office at the Althing,[1] but later the godi in whose district the Althing lay.

The Althing began on Thursday when ten weeks (fifty days) of summer had passed, and lasted fourteen days.[2]

To the Althing all the godis had to come, and to arrive on Thursday night, before the sun had left the plain; if not, they forfeited their godiship. If a godi had met with lawful hindrances, the godi of the same Thing-district decided who should take his place. He had the right to call upon every ninth man of his Thingmen to follow him to the Spring-thing.[3]

All the bœndr who had come to the Althing on Thursday night were considered *right Thingmen*, but the bœndr who remained at home had to pay a fine. If they came before the first Sunday of the Thing they were *right Thingmen*, but received no pay. The Thingmen were not allowed to leave the precincts of the Thing before the assembly was dissolved.[4]

"All godis shall come to the Thing on the fifth day of the week when 10 weeks of the summer have passed before the sun leaves the Thing-plain. If they do not come they are fined and lose their godiship, unless necessity causes their absence. The Thingmen shall come to the Thing on the fifth day of the week and go to their booth with the godi in whose Thing-district they are; each of them shall have a partition of cloth across the booth; each shall get Thing-journey pay, and they are Thingmen both in their own matters and in those of others. The godi is then bound to give a Thingman room in his booth; if he does not, then the Thingman does not break the law though he go to another booth, and has also a claim to the Thing-journey pay. Men shall pay Thing-journey pay as they agree upon in every district with the godi. . . The Thingmen shall not be one night or longer away from the Thing; nor are they Thingmen when they go outside the Thing-marks" (Grágás, i. 24).

Sometimes meetings took place called *Vápnathing*, where

[1] Landnáma, 1, c. 9; Islendinga Sögur, i. 336.
[2] Grágás, 23, 43.
[3] Grágás, 59.
[4] Grágás, 23.

all the bœndr had to appear, and produce for inspection the arms which every man was legally obliged to have.

"Wherever a weapon-thing is to be, the king's steward (árman) or a *lendman* shall announce it in the autumn, and hold the Thing in the spring. All free and full-grown men shall come to it or pay a fine of three *aurar* each. Then men shall show their weapons as is laid down in the laws. A man shall have a broad-axe or a sword, a spear, and a shield which must have at least three iron-rims across it, and whose handle must be fastened with iron nails. Three *aurar* are to be paid for every folk-weapon (missing or not in good order). For every rowing-bench the bœndr shall furnish two dozen arrows and one bow. One *eyrir* shall be paid for every missing arrow, and three *aurar* for a bow" (Earlier Gulathing's Law, 309).

The place where the judges sat was holy, and ropes, *vebönd*, marked out the boundaries of the enclosure.

"The court was held in a level field and hazel poles were put down in a circle into the ground with ropes around them; these ropes were called *vebönd* (sacred bands). Inside the circle sat the judges, twelve from Firdafylki, twelve from Sygnafylki, and twelve from Hördafylki; these thirty-six men were to judge in all cases. Arinbjörn chose the judges in Firdafylki, and Thórd of Aurland (the brother of Björn) those from Sygnafylki and these twenty-four acted together" (Egil's Saga, c. 57).

"It is an old right that stewards from every Fylki shall make the vebönd on the Thing-plain. The vebönd shall be so wide that those appointed for the law-court shall have room to sit inside. The stewards shall name for the law-court as many men as are fixed for each Fylki. From the inner Thrándheim forty men shall be named for each Fylki, and from the outer Thrándheim sixty men from each Fylki, and the oldest and most able men shall be named into the law-court. No lendirmen must go into the law-court unless the bœndr allow it. It is also law that no man who is not named must sit inside the vebönd without being liable to pay a mark. If a man leaves the law-court and goes outside the vebönd to another place he is to pay a full mark" (Frostathing's Law, i. 2).

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE LAWS OF THE EARLIER ENGLISH TRIBES.

Comprehensiveness of the codes of the Northmen—The earlier laws—The Icelandic laws—The Grágás law-book—Judgment rings—Power of the lawmen—Their office hereditary in early times—Their office elective in Iceland—Manner of election—Duty of the lawman—Ceremony at the close of his term of office—Length of the term of office—Norway divided into four law-districts—Law originally vested in the people—Members of the law-court—Mode of their election—Judicial decisions.

For clearness of language, comprehensiveness, and minuteness of detail, we find nothing in Europe during the first ten centuries of the Christian era that can compare with the earlier laws of the Norsemen; we must go back to Rome to find such comprehensive and exhaustive codes. They give us a very clear insight into the life and civilisation of the North, which from these records seem to have been far above those of neighbouring countries at that period. Some of the laws given in the course of this work demonstrate the mode of life of the time. We can see from these that, above all, the Norsemen abhorred perjury, murder, seduction, adultery, and the violation of the sanctity of blood-relationship.

The earlier laws, as all laws in every country, were but a codification of the customs of the people, handed down in many cases from very ancient times.

The Icelandic laws were based upon those of the mother-country, just as those of the English colonies are to-day based on the old English laws, and those of other colonies on those of the countries that founded them.

"When Iceland was widely settled, an eastern (Norwegian) man called Úlfljót was the first who brought laws there; this Teit told us; they were called Úlfljót's laws; Úlfljót was the father of Gunnar, from whom the Djupdælir in Eyjafjord are descended. The laws were mostly taken from the Gulathing-laws as they were then, or made according to the advice of

Thorleif the Wise, son of Hördakári, with regard to what should be added or taken away, or altered" (Islendingabók, c. 2).

One of the great authorities for our knowledge of the administration of justice among the Norwegians is the law-book, the Grágás.[1]

Sigvat Scald made a song wherein he says the king (Magnus) was too hard towards the bœndr.

"After this the king became milder; also many spoke to him about this. At last he had a talk with the wisest men, and they made laws. Then he had a law-book written which is still in Thrándheim, and is called Grágás (the grey goose). He became popular and was liked by all the people of the land, and therefore was called Magnus the Good" (Magnus the Good's Saga, Heimskringla, c. 17).

All over the Northern lands are yet seen numerous judgment rings, made of large stones, where justice was administered; some were used for religious ceremonies, some for duellings.

"The defender in a case can name six judges whom he does not want to judge in his case. They are to rise from the court (dóm), and sit inside the dómhring (sacred precincts) while the case is judged" (Grágás, i. p. 78).

The lawmen, or *lögmenn*, were the most influential and powerful men in the land; they were respected and loved by the people, and great faith was placed in their advice. Extensive knowledge of the earlier customs and ancient laws was absolutely necessary for this important office, in order to put before the Thing in a proper light the subjects under discussion. From the Sagas we see that their office in the earlier time was probably hereditary; but in Iceland, as the emigration broke the hereditary succession, the lawmen were chosen by election.

"Hákon was one of the most merry, eloquent, and modest of all men; he was very wise and especially fond of law-making. He enacted the Gulathing's law, with the advice of Thorleif the Wise; also the Frostathing's law, with the advice of Sigurd jarl and other Thrands who were very learned; but the *Heid-*

[1] The old laws of Sweden were published during the years 1827-77 (the life-work of Schlyter), in Lund, in thirteen volumes; the thirteenth volume is a dictionary to the twelve volumes preceding it.

sævi's law (Eidsivia law) had been enacted by Halfdan the Black (father of Harald Fairhair)" (Fornmanna Sögur, i., p. 31).

"At this feast were Gunnar and many others of the best men. After the feast Njal asked if he might take home Thorkall, Asgrim's son, for fostering, and he was with Njal long after. He loved Njal more than his father. Njal taught him the laws, so that he became the greatest lawman in Iceland" (Njala, 27).

The lawman was the representative of law, though he had neither judicial nor legislative power; he was selected by the law-court, or Lögretta, on the first Friday of the Althing, before the cases which were to be tried at the Thing were made public on the law-hill. Then if the election was not unanimous, it was decided by throwing of lots which quarter should elect him; the law-court men of the quarter could elect him from their own quarter or from another, but the majority decided the question. The lawman, followed by the members of the law-court, walked up to the law-hill and took the seat intended for him. An election was good for three years, and the same man could be elected again; but he could forfeit his office through injustice or carelessness.

His duty was to expound the laws to the people, and therefore it was necessary for him to know them well; before the law was written he was looked upon as a living law-book for the people; any who were in difficulties on points of law went to him, not only to the Althing, but to his home.

The part of the law relating to the regulations of the Thing was recited every summer on the first Friday of the assembly, and this was the lawman's first duty; all the remaining parts of the law had to be recited by him during the course of his three years of office.

At the dissolution of the Thing he made public from the law-hill the *timereckoning*, a kind of almanack for the coming year. Supposing that he was doubtful on any point he was allowed to take counsel with five or more men, wise in law, and their advice was considered sacred.

If the lawman had not arrived on the first Friday before the people went to the law-hill he had to pay a fine of three

marks, and they could elect another man in his place. The yearly pay for this office was 248 ells[1] of vadmal from the property of the law-court, besides the half of all the fines.

The closing ceremony at the term of office was for the lawman to recite the regulations of the Thing. This ceremony took place on the first day of the fourth summons, after which he was free. When the lawman died, a man was taken from his quarter to recite the regulations, and his successor was at once elected.

A lawman, when at home, could be a godi as well as a lawman, but at the Thing he was obliged to have a representative of his godiship.

"It is a law that there shall always be a man in our country whose duty it is to tell people the law, and he is called lawman (lögsögu-man = law-telling man). If the lawman dies, a man shall be taken the next summer from the quarter of the country in which he dwelt last, to recite the regulations of the Thing. Then the lawman is to be elected on the Friday before the cases are proclaimed. It is also good if all agree about one man. If one of the law-court men is against that which most want, it shall be decided with lots from which quarter the lawman is to be elected. The men of the quarter who win the lot shall choose the lawman, if he is willing to undertake the office, whether he is from their own quarter or from some other. If they do not agree, the majority shall rule; but if those who disagree about the lawman and sit in the law-court are equal in numbers, the bishop of the quarter shall decide. . . . From the law-court where the electing takes place the men shall go to the law-hill. The lawman shall go thither and sit in his seat, and seat those whom he wishes on the law-hill, and then the cases are to be brought forward. It is also law that it is the lawman's duty to recite all parts of the law in three summers, and the Thing-regulations every summer. The lawman has to recite all declarations of innocence (*e.g.* of outlawry), if possible, when the greater part of the people are present; also he shall recite the reckoning of seasons; and if people shall come to the Althing before ten weeks of the summer have passed and inquire about keeping the ember-days and the beginning of fasts, he shall make known all this at the dissolution of the Thing. . . . If he is not wise enough, he shall take counsel with five or more law-skilled men. Every intruder is fined three marks, and the lawman has to prosecute

[1] The Danish ell is a trifle more than two English feet.

him. The lawman shall receive every summer 400 feet of vadmal from the law-court property for his work; also half of all the fines. When the lawman has had the law-telling for three summers, he shall recite the Thing-regulations for the first Friday of the fourth summer; then he can give up office if he likes. If he wishes to keep office, the greater part of the law-court men can again decide. The lawman is to be fined three marks if he does not come to the Althing on the Friday before people go to the law-hill, no necessity hindering, and another lawman is to be elected if the people wish" (Grágás, i.)

The following table shows how long the elected lawmen usually remained in office, and how great was the order and stability of government in those days, the lawman having to stand for election once a year:—

Rafn (Lawman)	. . . . .	930–950 (20 years)
Thórarin	„	950–970 (20 „)
Thorkel	„	970–985 (15 „)
Thorgeir	„	985–1002 (17 „)

The whole of Norway was divided into four law districts, but not before the time of Hakon the Good, who codified the laws: (1) *Frostathing's Law* district, (2) *Gulathing's Law* district, (3) *Eidsifjathing's*, (4) *Borgarthing's*; but we find that the Gulathing existed, and had probably existed long, before Harald Fairhair.[1]

In the course of time changes and additions were made. In regard to how these new laws were to be made, the laws themselves contain no provision; but that they were made by the co-operation of king and people is evident, and their adoption depended, no doubt, on the standing, wisdom, and influence of him who proposed them.

When Harald Fairhair became king of all Norway his idea seems to have been that the royal power established by him

[1] *Gulathing*, so called from Gula or Guley (an island), where the Thing took place. *Frostathing*, from some local name. Our knowledge of the earlier laws of the Northmen is derived from the earlier *Gulathing's Law*, almost completely preserved in writing from the latter half of the 12th century. The earlier *Frostathing's Law* is almost completely preserved in a writing from the earlier part of the 13th century. Of the earlier *Eidsifjathing's Law*, the earlier *Borgarthing's Law*, and the earlier *Bjarkeyjar Law*, or town-law, there are only fragments left. Most of the Icelandic laws are comprised in the *Grágás*, which is completely preserved in writing not later than the year 1200.

The historical Sagas often show the effect of the laws in real life and how the latter were interpreted by the people.

should be exalted far above existing laws, and from it every change in these laws ought to emanate for the future.

King Hákon yielded up to the country the proprietary right which his father had usurped. New legal relations were then entered into between king and people; these seem to have been called *landsrétt* (law of the land), which could not be changed without the consent of both king and people.

The *lög*, or law proper, dealing with the relations existing between man and man, was regarded as having originated from the people alone, and therefore was their private property. But royalty being acknowledged as a necessary part of the state, and as such amenable to the *lög*, was on that account given a voice in its changes or revisions.

In the first place, the legislative power of the country was transferred from the *Fylkisthings* to the *Lawthings*, and was placed in the hands of representative men (*nefndarmenn*)[1] instead of in the hands of all the *bœndr* of the *fylki*. Thus the Lawthings became the only legislative power in the country, each one legislating for its separate district. Then the various earlier laws were consolidated into one law for every district.

By this important change royalty appears in a highly influential aspect; however, as is clearly shown, only in consequence of a special power given it for the time being, and not as a right established for all time.

The highest power was not in the Althing, but in the *Lögretta* (law-court), composed of two kinds of members—those who were self-named, or godis by right (they were thirty-nine), and those who were elected (twelve for the northern quarter, and nine for each of the others); but these godis took three men from each quarter which had only nine godis, and so the number was increased to forty-eight, to which number was added the lögmadr (lawman). The number of judges or godis of the Lögrétta at the Gulathing seems to have been thirty-six.

The elected members were appointed thus. Every one of

[1] *Nefnd* also=a body of men or arbitrators to give judgment in a case. In the old Swedish law it was composed of twelve members (see Schlyter). It is not found in the Icelandic laws, but the Görd is its equivalent.

the forty-eight chose two of his Thingmen and a third man as advisers; thus the law-court men consisted of 144 members (besides the lawman, who made the number 145).

The *Lögthing* (law-thing) did not appear before the time of Hákon the Good, when the country was divided into four districts.

The law-court had a certain place on the Thing-plain, and was part of the Thing. There were three benches, one behind the other; on the middle bench sat the forty-eight self-elected law-court men and the lawman; on the front and the last bench were seated the elected members. The judicial power rested with those on the middle bench, for the law-court men on the two other benches could only give advice.

When a decision had a majority for it from the middle bench, all the law-court men assented, and it was made public from the law-hill by the lawman.

The court was to come together on both Sundays and on the closing day, and the lawman could call the members together when he wanted, but only if the majority of the Thingmen wished.

Less important matters could be decided though the full number were not present, provided there were not less than forty-eight; and the lawman could take men from the two other benches to fill the empty seats on the middle bench. No man but a member was allowed a seat on the law-court benches. The Thingmen sat round, and only the one who had something to say to the law-court was allowed to rise.[1]

"We shall also have a law-court every summer at the Althing, and it shall always sit on the place where it has long been. There shall be three benches round the law-court, so long that forty-eight men may sit on each of them easily, namely twelve men from each quarter who have the right to sit in the law-court, and the lawman besides; these rule laws and licenses, and they, and also our bishops, shall sit on the middle bench. From the northern quarter those twelve men shall sit in the law-court who have the twelve godiships which were there when they had four districts with three godis in each. From all the other quarters those nine shall sit in the law-court who have the full and old godiships, which were

[1] Grágás, 211–217.

three in every Spring-thing, when three Thing-districts were in each of the three quarters, and they shall each of them take one man from each of the old Thing-districts, so that twelve men sit in the law-court from each quarter. . . .

"Each man who sits in the law-court has to have two men to give him advice, one in front of himself, and the other behind him and his Thingmen; then the benches are fully occupied, with forty-eight men on each bench. No man shall sit inside the benches on the space of the law-court except those who have cases; but at other times they can sit there, and the lawman has to dispose of the seats. The people shall sit outside the benches. Only those who have cases . . . have the right to rise in the law-court when laws or licenses are considered. He who rises (without the right to do so) is to be fined three marks, and whoever likes can prosecute him. People who crowd so much to the *Lögrétta* purposely, or make so much noise or tumult that cases are disturbed, are liable to lesser outlawry, as in the case of every disturbance at the Thing. If men come to the law-court who have to sit there and others have sat in their seats, they shall ask for their seats, and the men are not punished if they go away; but if they tarry when the seat is asked for, they are fined three marks. Then the man shall ask for his seat with witnesses, and if the other does not rise he is liable to lesser outlawry. . . .

"The law-court shall sit both Sundays (Drottnisdag) of the Thing and the last day of the Thing, and always between those days when the lawman or the greater part of the people wish. . . . There their laws shall be changed and new laws be made if people want them; there all innocence (e.g. of outlawry) shall be asked for. As soon as the godis get into their seats each of them shall place a man on the bench before him and another on the bench at his back for advice. Then the men who have cases shall tell what they disagree upon; then they shall think on the case until they are decided in their mind on it and ask all law-court men who sit on the middle bench to tell what each of them wants in this case according to law. Thereupon each godi shall tell what the laws say and with whom he will go in this case, and the majority shall rule. If an equal number of law-court men on both sides say that two different decisions are lawful then the decision of those with whom the lawman sides shall rule. If the others are more they shall rule, and both shall take *véfangseid* (oath of division) to this that they think what they decide in this case is lawful and follow it up because it is law. . . . It is the lawman's duty to tell all those who ask him what is law, both

at the Thing and at home, but not to give advice in a suit.... If the lawman commits something which the greater part of the Thingmen would call Thing-breach then he is liable to lesser outlawry" (Grágás, i. 4).

"We shall go to the law-hill in the morning, and lead the courts forward for challenging not later than when the sun is to be seen on the western rock of the chasm seen from the seat of the law-man on the law-hill. The law-man shall go out first if he is in good health, then the godis with their judges if they are not hindered; otherwise every one of them shall get a man in his place" (Grágás, i. 26).

"If one or more judges retire, then the prosecutor has the right to invite to lot-drawing at the court all those who have cases before it, and decide the place where they shall draw lots about proffering the case. Every man who has a case before the court shall put one lot in a cloak skirt, though he has more than one case. Every man shall mark out his lot, and they shall all be put into a skirt, and four shall be taken out in one" (Grágás, 37).

"The first summer that Bergthór (Hrafnsson) recited laws a new law was made that our laws should be written in a book the next winter in the house of Haflidi Másson, after the dictation and ruling of Bergthór and other wise men chosen for it. They were to make new laws wherever they thought them better than the old ones. These were to be recited the following summer in the *Lögrétta* (law-court), and all those were to be kept against which the greater part of the people did not vote. *Vigslódi* (part of the laws treating about manslayings) and many other laws were written and recited in the Lögrétta by priests the following summer. All liked them well, and none were against them" (Islendingabók, c. 10).

From the following account we can see what great power the lawman had over the people, and how well the latter understood that the price of freedom was constant watchfulness.

King Olaf of Sweden and St. Olaf of Norway constantly quarrelled about the frontiers of their countries. The bœndr in the Vikin got St. Olaf to send men to the King of Sweden to make peace. Rögnvald jarl of Vestr Gautland, who was friendly to Norway, helped the men sent, whose leader was Björn Stallari (marshal). The following account tells how they succeeded, with the help of Thorgnýr, lawman:

"At this time there was in Tíundaland a lawman named

Thorgnýr, the son of Thorgnýr Thorgnýsson, whose family had for many reigns been lawmen in Tíundaland. Thorgnýr was old, and kept a numerous bodyguard around him. He was said to be the wisest man in Sviaveldi, and was the kinsman and foster-father of Rögnvald jarl of Vestr Gautland.

"Rögnvald jarl came one night to the bœr of Thorgnýr the lawman. . . . There were many outside, who received him well, and took charge of his horses and harness. The jarl went into the hall, which was full of men. In the high-seat there sat an old man. Björn (King Olaf's marshal) and the others had never seen a man so tall or so stout before; his beard was so long that it lay on his knees and covered his whole breast; he was handsome, and looked like a high-born man. The jarl walked up and saluted him. Thorgnýr welcomed him, and told him to go to the seat where he was used to sit; and the jarl sat down opposite Thorgnýr. It was some nights before the jarl told his errand; he asked Thorgnýr to go with him into the speech-room, and Björn and his men followed him there. The jarl began by relating how Olaf Norway's king had sent men in order to make peace; he spoke long of what troubles the war with Norway caused to the Vestgautar, and how he had promised to follow these envoys to the King of Sweden, who disliked the matter so strongly that no one dare broach it. 'Now, foster-father,' said the jarl, 'I do not trust myself alone in this matter; therefore I come to thee, and expect thy good advice and help.' When the jarl had ended his speech Thorgnýr was silent for a while, and then answered: 'You behave strangely; you like to have the high name of jarl, and yet you know no expedient when you get into some difficulty. Why didst thou not remember, before promising this journey, that thou hast not power to speak against King Olaf. It seems to me more worthy to be reckoned among bœndr and be free in one's speech, though the king be present. *I will* go to the Upsala Thing, and give thee such help that thou shalt say without fear before the king what thou likest.' The jarl thanked him for this promise, and remained with Thorgnýr and rode with him to the Thing. A great crowd was with King Olaf, who was with his bodyguard. The first day, when the Thing began, King Olaf sat on a chair, and around him stood his bodyguard. In another place sat Rögnvald jarl and Thorgnýr, and in front of them the jarl's guard and Thorgnýr's troop of *húskarlar* (house carls); behind the chair stood a crowd of bœndr in a circle. Some even went up on the hills and mounds to listen. When the king had made his customary speech at the Thing, Björn Stallari rose near the jarl's seat and said aloud: 'King Olaf sent me

hither to say that he offers the King of Sweden reconciliation, and the division of land which of old existed between Norway and Sweden.' He spoke so loudly that the King of Sweden heard it distinctly. At first, when the King of Sweden heard King Olaf of Norway named, he thought he came on some errand of his own; but when he heard of reconciliation and division of land between Sweden and Norway he started up and shouted loudly that this man should be silent; so Björn sat down. When he could get a hearing, the jarl arose and spoke of King Olaf the Stout's message and offer of reconciliation to Olaf, King of Sweden. He said that the Vestr Gautar asked that reconciliation should be made with Norway's king; he enumerated every difficulty which the Vestr Gautar had on hand because they missed all those things from Norway which they needed in order to live well, and on the other hand were exposed to attacks and plundering if the Norway king should gather a host and make war on them. He added that Olaf, Norway's king, had sent men thither to ask for the king's daughter Ingigerd. After the jarl had finished speaking, Olaf, King of Sweden rose and answered that he highly disliked the reconciliation; he reproached the jarl very greatly for his boldness, as he had made truce and peace with the stout man (King Olaf) and made friends with him. He added that he had proved traitor to him, and he would deserve to be driven from the realm, and that all this was caused by the urging of his wife Ingibjörg, and that it had been most unwise to marry such a woman for love: he spoke a long time and severely, and again turned his reproach against Olaf the Stout and sat down, and there was silence for some time. Then rose Thorgnýr, and when he stood up all the bœndr, who before had been sitting, rose, and all the rest pressed forward, wanting to listen to what he said. At first there was great tumult and clashing of weapons in the crowd, but when a hearing was got, Thorgnýr said: 'The temper of the King of Sweden is not what it has been. Thorgnýr, my grandfather, remembered Eirik Emund's son, Uppsala-king, and said of him, that while he was at his most active age he had a levy every summer and went to various lands, and subjected Finnland and Kirjálaland, Eistland and Kúrland, and a great part of the eastern lands, where still may be seen the earth-forts and other great works that he made; yet he was not so proud that he would not listen to men if they wished to speak to him. My father, Thorgnýr, was with King Björn a long time, and knew his habits. During his time his realm stood with great strength and with no abatement; and he was easy to deal with by his friends. I can remember King

Eirik the Victorious, and was with him on many war-journeys; he increased the Swedish realm, and defended it manfully, and it was easy for us to give him advice. But this king now allows no man to be so bold as to talk to him except only what he wants, and uses he thereto all his power, and permits his tributaries to fall away from him from lack of strength and courage. He would hold Norway's realm subject to himself, though no King of Sweden has before desired this, and thereby causes trouble to many a man. Now this is the will of us bœndr, that thou, King Olaf, should make reconciliation with Olaf the Stout, and marry thy daughter Ingigerd to him. If thou wilt win back to thyself those realms in the east which thy kinsmen and forefathers once owned, we will all follow thee thither. But if thou wilt not do what we tell thee, we will attack and slay thee, and not endure from thee trouble and lawlessness: our forefathers have done the same, they threw five kings down into a well, at the Múla-Thing, who before had been as full of overbearing as thou hast been with us. Tell us now quickly which choice thou wilt make.' Then the multitude clashed their weapons. The king arose, and said that he wanted everything to be as the bœndr wished, for thus had all Kings of Sweden acted. At this the grumblings of the bœndr ceased. The chiefs, the king, the jarl and Thorgnýr talked together, and then made peace and reconciliation on behalf of the King of Sweden, according to the proposal of Norway's king. It was resolved at that Thing that Olaf's daughter Ingigerd should be married to Olaf Haraldsson, and the king delivered into the jarl's hands the power to betroth her, and gave to him the charge of the marriage"[1] (St. Olaf's Saga, c. 79–81).

[1] In the same Saga, c. 96, there is another account of the powers of the lawman.

In ch. 81, the king (of Sweden), the jarl of Vestr Gautland, and the lawman Thorgnýr are all three called *höfdingjar* = *chiefs*.

CHAPTER XL.

INDEMNITY, WEREGILD.

The freeman's right to peace—Inviolability of body and honour—Indemnity for murder—Inequality of freemen's personal rights—Computation of indemnity—Lists of the amount paid or received—The rights of Icelanders trading in Norway—Indemnity for wounds—Laws relating to indemnity—Slander—Indemnity in kind.

EVERY freeman was *fridheilag* (peace-holy), unless he had forfeited his right to peace. This sacredness of person meant both inviolability of body and honour: for every breach of this, in deed or word, he could claim a redress consisting of a certain amount of money, which was his *rétt*.

"It is first in our *mannhelgi* (man-holiness) that every man in the country shall be peace-holy in and out of the country" (Frostath., iv. 1).

Blood feuds and revenge were of such common occurrence in these days, that throughout the Sagas there is a great mass of literature which deals with the customs and laws regulating the indemnity for murder.

As every individual, so every family had its rétt. This was the so-called *manngjöld*, or indemnity due to the family as a redress for the slaying of one of its members. This view of the family, which is very old, namely, that it was its right and duty to avenge the slaying of one of its members on the slayer or his family, was the law of the land, and the *weregild* (indemnity) was equivalent to buying off the family revenge. It was really the price of the dead man, which varied according to his rétt when living.

If the slayer died before paying the weregild, his heir had to pay it.

From the laws we find that the rétt, or personal rights

of every freeman, were not equal. People were divided into classes, as we have seen, and it was according to his rank that a man had to pay or receive weregild.

The entire family weregild was computed in gold, one[1] *mark* of gold being reckoned as eight *marks* of silver in weight. *Six* marks of gold seem to have been the family weregild for a *haulld*, and that of the other classes was fixed in proportion.

A general rule seems to have prevailed for the computation of the *rétt* in all upper classes, which was reckoned in silver, or 12 ells of *vadmal* for every eyrir. In the lower classes it was reckoned in the so-called *lögeyrir* (legal eyrir), i.e. about 12 feet of *vadmal* for every eyrir.

Some rétts were hereditary, and a wife enjoyed the same rétt as her husband received, and retained it even during widowhood.

"This is about the rights of women. Every man has full rétt on behalf of his wife. Three marks are due to a haulld if his wife is struck.

"A widow shall have her rétt herself, as high a rétt as that of her late husband, and whoever she wishes shall claim it" (Frostath., x. 37).

In Gulathing's Law the haulld is the centre of the division; his rétt is three marks.

"A haulld shall get as his full rétt three marks. The rétt of every man upward (of higher rank) from the haulld shall increase by a third and decrease downwards" (Frostath., x. 34).

The amount to be paid or received by each degree of a family was entirely independent of the number of members of such degree. In the computation the following rules were chiefly followed:—The weregild on both sides embraced the family within the same degrees of the slain and the slayer, each individual degree on the side of the slayer paying weregild to the corresponding one in the family of the slain; the first receiver of weregild was the son of the slain, or, if he was not alive, the father.

"The first indemnity (*baug*)[2] is called head-indemnity. That

[1] Eight aurar made a mark.
[2] Indemnity to be paid in metal rings of silver or gold.

is ten marks. That is (as much as) thirty-two cows if the slain man is odal-born. The weregild increases and decreases like other rétts of men. The father shall get it if the son is not alive; if both live, the father owns three marks. If he is not able to fight, he gets twelve aurar from the slayer. If the slayer is outlawed he loses that indemnity. When the slayer dies his heir *receives the axe* (has to pay the weregild)" (Gulath., 218).

"The second indemnity is called brother's indemnity. That is five marks, or sixteen cows. The third is the indemnity of the brœdrung (first cousin). That is four marks, or half an eyrir less than thirteen cows" (Gulath., 219).

The sum paid was the same whether the receiver was one or more. The amount paid by each degree became smaller in proportion as the kinship became more distant. The degrees of kinship embraced in the weregild were always considered as existing on both sides. If they in reality did not exist, the slayer had to pay, and the next of kin on the other side to receive, for the missing degree.

"The slayer shall pay the head-indemnity to the son of the dead. The brother of the slayer shall pay indemnity to the brother of the dead if he is found; otherwise the slayer shall pay it. The brœdrung of the slayer shall pay to the brœdrung of the dead brœdrung-indemnity if he is found; otherwise the slayer shall pay it" (Gulath., 222).

The *saktal* was a list of the amount to be paid or received by every degree in the weregild. Two or three of these lists are found in the Gulathing's Law, and one in the Frostathing's Law.

The nearest kinswomen on both sides, mother, daughter, sister and wife, paid and received a certain gift called *Kvenngjöf*. Otherwise a woman was never reckoned as payer or payee, unless she were sole heir. But the moment she was married her rights in this respect passed over to her nearest male relative.

"A mark is a woman's kvenngjöf. Four women shall receive it if they are found; the mother of the slain man, his daughter, his sister, and his wife. Each of them receives two aurar if they all exist. Wherever they are not found the son of the slain man shall receive it. If all the women are missing, the slayer shall take this mark and pay it to the son of the slain.

If one of the women is missing, the son of the slain shall receive two aurar, and if two are missing, half a mark, and if all are missing, one mark" (Gulath., 221).

The Gulathing's Law differs from the Frostathing's Law only in one point, viz., the last divides the bondi into two classes, the *árborinn-man* and the *reksthegn*.[1] The law seems to mean in the case of the latter a man who was not odal-born, yet could point to four generations of freemen on his father's side; but the difference between the two is not told.

The Icelanders when trading or staying in Norway took the rétt of a haulld; but if they remained more than three years, or settled there, they were to have the rétt which they had in their own country, and which had to be proved by witnesses.

All other foreigners had the rétt of a bondi unless they could prove by witness a higher one.

"A freedman (*leysingi*) owns six aurar as single rétt, and his son a mark as single rétt. A *bondi* owns 12 aurar as single rétt, a *haulld* three marks, a *lendrman* and a *stallari* (marshal) six marks, the jarl and the bishop 12 marks. The son of a *lendrman* shall get the rétt of a haulld if he gets no land. . . . . Icelanders have the rétt of a haulld while they are on trading journeys, until they have been here three winters and lived here. Then they have the rétt which witnesses prove. All other foreigners who come to this country have the rétt of a bondi unless they prove by witnesses that they have a higher rétt" (Gulath., 200).

The inhabitants of towns all enjoyed the same rétt, which was three *marks*.

"It is the law that all men have an equal rétt in the town (namely) the rétt of a haulld, 3 marks, the lendrman as well as the freedman who has made his freedom-ale" (Bjarkeyjar Law, 97).

The *lendir-menn* were regarded as a higher division of the haulld; and although the son of the lendr-man, as such, had

[1] The reksthegn was a freeman descended from thrall kin, although his family might have been free for several generations. The rétt of the árborinnmadr was 12 aurar, that of the reksthegn one mark. The classes in the two other law districts were probably similar to those above, but it seems that the haulld and bondi were classified as one.

most hopes of receiving such a dignity, and until his fortieth year enjoyed the same rétt as his father, yet, in case he had not before that time really received his appointment as lendr-man, he belonged thenceforth only to the class of the haulld, and enjoyed only the rétt of the latter.

The king's *ármenn* enjoyed half a haulld's rétt, or the same as a bondi.

With the introduction of Christianity we find that the rétt of a bishop was equal to that of a jarl. The jarl and bishop had the double rétt of a lendr-man, 12 marks each; the *stallari* (marshal of the king) had the rétt of a lendr-man. The priest, the *skutilsvein* (page), the goldsmith of the king, and those who steered his trade-ships, had that of a haulld. In all these cases the children only inherited the rétt which belonged to their father at their birth.

Indemnity paid for wounds varied according to the rétt of the man who gave the wound.

For wounds in the face, or on places where hair or clothes did not hide the cicatrice, an additional indemnity was paid called *áljótseyrir* (indemnity for looking more ugly); for cutting and burning, an additional indemnity which was called *granbragds-eyrir* (grön = lip), which meant that the pain was so great that the lips of the man trembled under the operation.[1]

If the giver of the wound was outlawed on that account, and wanted to be released from the outlawry, he had to buy himself out for fifteen marks, to be paid to the king; and to the wounded man a sum according to his rétt.

"If a freedman wounds a man he shall pay 12 aurar as fine, and his son double, and a bondi triple; an odal-born man double the bondi, a lendr-man and a stallari double again, and a jarl double the amount they pay, the king double the jarl. When a man wounds another he shall pay wound-indemnities to the one whom he wounded, one eyrir for the wound, one eyrir where a muscle is cut, one eyrir when edge and leg meet, one eyrir for every bone that falls down if it makes a sound when thrown into the scales, one eyrir for every singeing, one eyrir for each cut in the clothes, one eyrir for

[1] The laws on wounds are so minute and numerous that it is not possible to give them in full. Cf. also Gulath, 179–215; Frostath., iv. 42–53.

every cut if it bleeds, half a mark for wounds in the vital parts, half a mark for marrow-wounds (piercing to the marrow). The wounder shall pay healing-fee and give to them both (physician and wounded) food for a month. If a muscle is cut off and falls on the ground the indemnity is six aurar, and as much if a scar is left in a man's head (a scar which causes pain when the head is combed). All breast-wounds shall be valued, but back-wounds receive double indemnity. If a man is present at a quarrel and does not part nor help either he shall pay a *slanbaug* (ring or indemnity of laziness) to the king 12 aurar" (Gulath., 185).

"There are bone-indemnities (bein-gjöld) wherever a bone is loosened from the wound of a man. . . . Then there is one eyrir to be paid and one eyrir for each little bone until they are six. But if so large a bone is loosened that six holes may be made in it six aurar shall be paid, but a bone-indemnity is never higher than six aurar" (Frostath., iv. 49).

"If a haulld wounds a man he is liable to pay six *baugar* (rings) to the king, and twelve aurar are in each ring. If an árborinn-madr wounds a man he has to pay three rings; and a leysingi (freedman) two, a lendr-man twelve, a jarl twenty-four, a king forty-eight, twelve aurar being in every ring, and the sum is to be paid to all to whom it is due by law. All this is valued in silver" (Frostath., iv. 53).

"If an árman (steward) is struck or slain at a church or at a feast or at a Thing the slayer is outlawed, as for the slaying of any man; but if anywhere else he shall pay fifteen marks, and the árman has half the rétt of a haulld" (Frostath., iv. 57).

"The king's *skutilsveins* (pages) shall have the rétt of a haulld in all greater and lesser things. But with regard to other servants of the king they shall have the rett of a haulld if they wear *ale-cloths* (aprons) on their necks, and also the one who steers his trading-ship between lands, and also his gold-smiths. *Stallaris* (marshals) shall have the rett of a lendr-man in smaller and larger things" (Frostath., iv. 60).

If a man bit another man, his fore teeth were broken at the Thing by the king's tax-gatherer (*sýslu-man*), but no indemnity was paid. Wounds with knives were also punished at the Thing.[1]

"It is unfitting that men should bite each other like horses or dogs. When a man bites another the *syslumadr* (steward)

[1] N. G. L., ii. 60.

shall have him taken and brought to the Thing and his teeth broken out of his mouth" (King Magnus' Laws).

To the wounded man himself, indemnity for wounds and fees for physicians were paid; the former varying according to the nature of the wounds, but otherwise equal for all without distinction of rétt. The fee paid to a physician was fixed according to the time taken in healing the wound.

"One eyrir shall be paid as healing-fee every month and two monthly allowances of meal and two of butter. Thus it shall be every month till . . . . It shall be offered at the first Thing, and his farm and his loose property is taken until he has paid lawful fine to the king and wound-indemnities and healing-fee to the wounded. If he does not offer it at the first Thing he is outlawed and his property, except what he takes into the wood with him (is confiscated)" (Frostath., iv. 12).

"All have equal wound-indemnities (sárbœtr), thegn and thrall. If a man wounds a man's thrall he shall feed him while he lies wounded and pay his work to his master and his healing-fee" (Gulath., 215).

If any one killed his own thrall he was not punished, but had to declare it; and if he failed to do so, he was *mordingi* (murderer). If a man slew the thrall of another man, he had to pay the value of the naked thrall to the master, but nothing to the king.[1]

Atli, a freeman working for Njal, was slain by a kinsman of Halgerd, the wife of Gunnar; when Gunnar, who was at the Althing, knew it, he went to Njal and wished him to arbitrate.

"Njal said: 'It was our intention not to disagree on this, and I will not make him a thrall.' Gunnar said he assented, and stretched forward his hand. Njal named witnesses, and they agreed on this. Skarphedin said: 'Halgerd does not allow our húskarls to die from old age.' Gunnar answered: 'It is thy mother's intention that the blows should be mutual in each other's farm.' Njal said: 'There will soon be too much of this.' He arbitrated that one hundred in silver should be paid, and Gunnar paid it at once" (Njala, c. 38).

In ch. 39 we are told that the man who slew Atli is slain by one of Bergthóra's men, and Gunnar pays back the weregild to Njal.

[1] Frostath., v. 20.

Offence in word consisted in abuse or disgraceful similes, or in bringing an accusation of some disgraceful deeds.

In the first case the offended had to get witnesses to the offence, and must not return the abuse; if he did so, he was held to have avenged himself, when the two offences were balanced one against the other, and there was no indemnity. In the second case the offender could free himself by proving the truth of his accusation, or getting ten witnesses that the accusation was grounded on a report from the house of the offended. The offended person then had to deny this on oath, or in some cases by undergoing the burning iron ordeal; according to the result the offender had or had not to pay indemnity.

If a man was slandered behind his back to the king or a chief, the offender was liable to the punishment which the slandered would have had had he been guilty.

"No one of us shall slander another to the king, or to a more powerful man than himself. If he slanders away a man's life or property, he has slandered away his own property or life, if it is proved. If he denies it he shall do it with a *séttareid* (an oath). He shall have the same punishment which he meant for the man" (Gulath., 137).[1]

"No man can take his rétt oftener than three times,[2] neither man nor woman, if he does not take revenge in the meantime" (Gulath., 186).

The weregild was not always paid in cash, but was sometimes given in kind.

"Now the payment must be regulated. A cow shall be worth two aurar and a half. When a cow is paid it must not be older than eight winters, unless the receiver cares to take it. All paid cows must have good horns and tails, eyes and teats, and in every respect be good. Corn and oxen and all calf-bearing cows may be paid as indemnities (baug). Gold or burnt (cleansed) silver may be paid if found. Horses, but not mares. A stallion, but not a gelding. It must not have faults. Sheep may be paid, but not goats. Odal-land, but not kaup-land. A ship, unless it is repaired or so old that the first oar-loops of it have been rown off, its stems are

[1] See oath, p. 558.

[2] It was thought unmanly to be disgraced three times and take no revenge. Cf. also Gulath., 196; Addition to Frostath. Law, 36.

broken off, or it is repaired with planks which have not been put on while the ship stood on its stocks. Nothing worth less than one eyrir shall be paid unless the indemnity is less. . . . . Weapons which are unimpaired, hard and unbroken. Those with which the man was slain shall not be offered. A sword shall not be paid as indemnity unless it is ornamented with gold or silver. Vadmal and all new linen and all new and uncut cloth, unless the receiver wants to take new and cut cloth. Men's clothes and not women's may be paid, new and not old. New stuff not cut into a cloak. Blue cloaks and skrùd (a kind of stuff) new and uncut. All boys brought up at home when not older than fifteen winters, unless the receiver assents, may be paid. Bondmaids shall not be paid as weregild" (Gulath., 223).

CHAPTER XLI.

THE OATH AND ORDEAL.

Sanctity of the oath—Manner of taking the oath—Oath upon the Bible adopted with Christianity—Oaths sworn by objects—The oath of truce—Oath by witnesses—Purifying oath—Its various forms—Perjury—Different forms of ordeal—Passing under sods—Ordeal of boiling water—Walking on red-hot irons.

THE law of the people was much influenced by their religion. Great stress was laid upon the sanctity of the oath, which, like a vow, was considered most binding. No other literature points out so clearly and so often the sacredness of an oath and the loathing in which oath-breakers were held. Let the youth of every land learn this noble trait of the character of the Norsemen. No one could absolve a man for breaking his oath, no matter how great might have been the splendour of his achievements. The higher born the man was, the more did he consider himself bound to keep his oath.

History teaches us that the avenging fates have never been slow to smite low to the dust oath-breakers, as well as nations which, in a moment of hallucination showing the moral disease of the mind of their people, have absolved the men who had committed this crime.

The proofs used to clear a man were "*witnesses*," "*oath*," and "*ordeal*." The taking of an oath was looked upon as a very sacred and holy ceremony. He who violated it sooner or later incurred the enmity of the gods. Many examples were remembered by the people showing how an oath was kept, in spite of the greatest provocation or temptation. What any one had sworn was considered sacred, and could not be broken with impunity.

The oath was taken at the Thing, or Temple, by placing the hand on a ring which had been consecrated by having been dipped in the blood of the sacrificial ox. This ring, which was

of silver, lay on the altar of each head temple, and was therefore called altar-ring, or "*stalla-hring*." The godi was required to have it on his arm at every Thing, so that it was always at hand if needed. The man who took the oath held his hand upon the ring,[1] and in the presence of witnesses called upon the Asar and begged their help. Three Asar, Frey, Njörd, and Odin, were always called upon.

The oath upon the Bible, a practice found to exist to this day among people chiefly descended from the North, is but a form of the ancient laws, and, like many others, was adopted with Christianity.

"A ring, weighing two *aurar* or more, was to lie in every head temple on the altar, and every godi was to wear it on his arm at all Law-things which he should hold himself, and to redden it in the blood of the cattle which he himself sacrificed there. Every man who had to perform legal duties there had first to take an oath on this ring and name two or more witnesses, and say: 'I call to witness that I take oath on the ring, a lawful oath, so help me Frey and Njörd, and the Almighty As (Odin), to defend or prosecute this case, or give the evidence, verdict, or judgment which I know to be most true and right and lawful, and to perform everything as prescribed by law which I may have to perform while I am at this Thing'" (Landnáma, iv. c. 7).[2]

In a fight against Glum, Thorvald Krok was slain; the people were in doubt if the slaying had been done by Glum or one of his men. At the Althing it was decided that Glum should take an oath the following autumn that he had not slain Thorvald, and he was to take the oath in three temples in Eyjafjord.

"The man who was to take a temple oath held in his hand a silver ring which had been reddened in the blood of the bull which had been sacrificed, and it must weigh not less than three aurar. Then Glum said these words: 'I call Ásgrim and Gizor as witnesses that I take a temple oath on the ring, and I tell the Asar that I was not there, and I fought not there, and I did not redden point and edge where Thorvald Krok was slain; now let those who are wise and are present here look to my oath.' The others could not find fault, and

[1] *Baug-eid*, or "ring-oath," is mentioned in Havamál, stanza 110.

[2] Cf. also Eyrbyggja, c. 4, 16, 44.

said they had not heard this wording before. The same oath was taken by him at Gnupafell and at Thverá" (Viga Glum's Saga, c. 25).

Oaths were sometimes sworn by objects. Völund says to Nidud, his father-in-law:—

First thou shalt to me
Swear all oaths
At the ship's side
And at the shield's edge,
At the horse's foot
And at the sword's edge
That thou killest not
The wife of Völund
Nor puttest to death
My bride.

(Völundarkvida, 33.)

Gudrun thus curses Atli, for having broken his solemn oath to her brothers, before she slays him in his bed and burns him and his men in his own hall:—

Go it thus with thee, Atli,
As thou to Gunnar
Often didst swear oaths
And name them of yore.
By the south-slanting sun,
By the rock of Sigty,
By the horse of the bed of rest,[1]
By the ring of Ull.[2]

(Atlakvida, 30.)[3]

The oath of truce or peace was sealed by hand-shaking, and had to be repeated with a great deal of care.

Snorri Godi, the famous Icelandic chief, when on his way from a feast with Thorgils Arason, stopped overnight at a farm called Breidabólstad. After they had entered and sat down, Snorri said:—

"'I have been told, Thorgils, that no man can cite the oath of truce so well as thee'" (Heidarviga, c. 33).

The following saga shows how an oath of peace was sometimes kept under the greatest temptations to break it. Gretti was an outlaw, and had come in disguise under the name of Gest to see some games of idróttir in which he was invited to take part; but knowing that if he was recognised his life would not be safe, he insisted that those present should take the oath of peace towards him.

"'Here I establish peace among all men, especially with regard to this man, named Gest, who sits here; and I include all *godords menn* (district chiefs) and good bœndr, and the

[1] The sleeping room.
[2] The stepson of Thor.
[3] See also Kjalnesinga, 2.

whole mass of young men able to fight, and all other heradsmen of the Hegranesthing district, or wherefrom any may have come with or without name; we give by hand-shaking safety and full peace to the unknown stranger who is called Gest, for games, wrestling, and all kind of merriment, for remaining here or returning home, whether he need go by sea or land or by other conveyance; he shall have peace in every named or unnamed place as long as he needs for a safe return, with observance of the plighted faith. I establish this peace for us, our kinsmen, friends and kindred, men as well as women, thralls and bondwomen, boys and independent men. He who violates the peace or breaks the plighted faith shall be a *peace-nithing*, and shall be outcast and driven from God and good men in heaven, and from all saints; and shall be received nowhere among men, but be driven away by every man as far as wolves are driven, or wherever Christians go to church, heathens sacrifice in temples, fire burns, earth produces, a speaking child calls its mother, mother bears son, people kindle fires, ships glide, shields glitter, sun shines, snow falls, a Finn runs on snow-shoes, fir grows, a hawk flies all the long spring day with a straight fair wind blowing under both wings, heaven encircles, world is settled and wind blows water towards sea, men sow corn; he shall shun churches and Christians, heathen bœndr, houses and caves, every home except hell. Now let us agree and be at peace one with the other in goodwill, whether we meet on mountain or beach, on ship or snow-shoes, on earth or jökul (glacier), on the high sea or on horseback, as if one find his friend on water or his brother on the way; agreeing as well one with another as son with father, or father with son, in all dealings. Now we join our hands together all of us, and keep this truce, and all words spoken in this plight of faith witnessed by God and good men, and all who hear my words or are here present.' Many said that much was in this, and Gest said: 'Well hast thou declared the truce, if thou and thy people do not break it afterwards, and I shall no longer delay showing myself.' He then threw off his hooded cloak and outer garments. Each looked at the other, very startled at recognizing Grettir Asmundsson, whom they knew by his size and strong frame, which were uncommon. They became silent, and Hafr perceived that his speech had been unwise. As the men from the herad walked two by two, each blamed the other, but most him who had pronounced the oath of peace. Then said Grettir: 'Make it plain to me what you have in your mind, for I do not wish to sit long without clothing (they removed their outer garments when they wrestled); you have much

more at stake than I in the keeping of the truce.' They made little answer, and sat down. The sons of Thord and Halldor, their brother-in-law, began to talk together. Some were in favour of keeping the truce, and others not, and they nodded their heads one to another. Tungustein said: 'Is that your thought, Grettir, but what will the chiefs do? Thou art in truth a great and brave man, but seest thou not how they put their noses together in deliberation what to do.'"

After a taunting song from Grettir, in which he ridiculed their indecision, Hjalti Thordarson said:—

"'It shall not be so; let us keep our oath of peace, though we have been outwitted; let us not ourselves set the example of violating the truce we have declared and given. Grettir shall go free wherever he likes, and the truce shall last until he has returned. Then this plighted faith will be no longer in force, whatever may happen between us.' All thanked him, and thought his opinion chief-like, considering the guilt of the person interested. Thorbjörn Öngul, Hjalti's brother, at this became silent" (Gretti's Saga, c. 73, 74).

Oaths by witnesses.—If there were witnesses, including at least two freemen who were of age, to testify under oath for or against, then the one who had the most witnesses won his case.

If a witness's appearance was hindered, then two men could take his evidence and give it under oath on his behalf.

If people heard a bad report about a man, evidence was given by ten men, two of whom had to swear to it, and the others verified their words that they had heard such report without knowing if it was true or not. Such evidence forced the accused to free himself from the accusation either by oath or ordeal.

The purifying oath, *skirsl*[1] or *dulareid*,[2] varied according to the accusation. It was taken either by the defendant alone, or by him and a certain number of co-swearers, the number of whom varied according to the nature of the cases. The greatest number was twelve, and the oath, which was considered the most solemn and important, was in such a case called *tylftareid* (twelve-men oath).

[1] *Skirsl*, to pass under jardarmen. See page 559.

[2] *Dulareid*, an oath of denial.

Geirrid was accused at the Thing of being a *kveldrida*,[1] by which she had caused some wounds on Gunnlaug.

"At the Thing a godi named Arnkel, Thorarin, and ten others took oath upon the altar-ring that she had not been the cause of Gunnlaug's injury" (Eyrbyggja).

The *tylftareid* was divided into two kinds, namely, a milder oath with the so-called *fangavitni*,[2] and a stronger one called *nefndarvitni*,[3] when each side chose six men from the *haullds* in the herad, neither related to nor enemies of either party. Of these twelve men defendant had to take two, and to add to them two of his nearest kinsmen, making with himself five, and the other seven were *fangavitni* chosen freely among the free men, the rest having nothing to do with the case. If one of the twelve men did not take the oath, then what is called *eidfall* (the one who fails in an oath) took place, and the whole affair was considered to be at an end, and the defendant lost the case.

"Wherever a *tylftareid* shall be and witnesses are named, then the plaintiff names one half of the witnesses, and the defendant the other; and each shall name as their witnesses when the oath is taken twelve of the best *haullds* in the fylki, or the best bœndr if *haullds* are not there. Neither foes nor friends shall be named. He shall take two of the twelve as witnesses, then two of his nearest kinsmen; then they are five with himself, and the other seven shall be free men and full-grown, who will be responsible for his words and oaths" (Frostath., iv. 8).

"Tylftareid (oath of twelve men) has to take place in order to free one from the accusation of murder" (Landnáma, 89).

Next came the oath given by six men, which was called *séttareid*,[4] which was taken when the five co-swearers were *fangavitni*. If the oath was given with *nefndarvitni* the proceedings were the same as in the case of the strong *tylftareid*. Each side chose three haullds; of these six the defendant chose one, to whom he added one of his nearest kinsmen, then they were three with himself, and the remaining three were *fangavitni*.

[1] Evening rider, night hag, witch, riding on wolves in the twilight.

[2] Witnesses fetched at random when defendant could choose his co-swearers.

[3] Witnesses called by a body of named men.

[4] *Séttareid*, an oath of six; i.e., six compurgators.

A still stronger *séttareid* is mentioned in Gulathing's Law under the name of *grimueid*.[1] In this six men of equal *rétt* with the defendant were chosen, and were co-swearers with him.

"Then there is *grimueid*. Three men shall be named on each side of equal *rétt* as him who is to be the seventh" (Gulath., 134).

In the *lýritareid* (a kind of oath of justification given by three men), the defendant himself was one of the swearers; the man of equal *rétt* not related to him was his co-swearer, and the third was any chosen freeman.

"The *lýritareid* shall be taken thus. He (plaintiff) shall take it himself, and another man of equal *rétt* who must neither be a kinsman on male or female side, nor a near relative. The third shall be a free and full-grown man who will be responsible for his word and oath" (Gulath., 135).

In the oath by two men, "*tveggja manna eid*," the defendant seems to have himself chosen his co-swearers without restriction. Like the oath of twelve, if one refused to swear to the case the procedure was not valid.

Perjury was punished by fine, and inability thereafter to give evidence, and loss of *rétt*.

"The men who become false witnesses are liable to pay three marks to the king, and are never able to give evidence after, or use any evidence (on their own behalf), and lose their *rétt*" (Frostath., xiii. 25).

The Ordeal.—The ordeal was a ceremony performed under different forms in order to prove the innocence or the truth of an accusation, and was preceded by an oath. Among the various kinds of ordeal was that of going under an arch or hoop of sods, a ceremony sometimes connected with an oath.[2]

If the plaintiff succeeded in passing under these sods without breaking them, or without their falling down, he was considered

[1] *Grima*, a hood covering the face; *grimueid*, a kind of oath taken by six compurgators. The origin of the word is obscure; perhaps the compurgators had to appear in court with cowls or hoods on.

[2] See chapter on Foster-brotherhood. Vol. ii. p. 61.

to have proved his case. The strips of sod seem to have generally been three.

"Ordeal then consisted in a man going under a strip of sod which was cut from the field; the ends of it were to be fast in the ground, and the man who was to perform the ordeal must go under it. He who went under the sod was considered not guilty if it did not fall down upon him. Thorkel made an agreement with two men that they should dispute about something, and be present when the ordeal was taking place and touch the turf, so that all should see that they threw it down. After this the ordeal was to be performed, and as soon as the man had come beneath the sod the men who were to rush against one another with weapons did so, and met close to the turf-loop and fell there; it fell down, as was likely, then men rushed between them and separated them, which was easy, for they fought with no anger. Thorkel Trefil asked for judgment on the ordeal. All his men said that it would have been satisfactory if nobody had spoiled it. Then Thorkel took all the movable property, while the lands were given to *Hrappsstadir*" (Laxdæla, c. 18).

Berg summoned Jökul to the *Hunavatns* Thing on account of a blow received from him during a wedding feast, and prepared the case.

"At the Thing they tried to reconcile them, but Berg said he would take no fine and not be reconciled unless Jökul went under three sod-slices, as was there the custom after great offences, and thus show his humility. Jökul said that sooner should the Troll take him than he would lower himself thus. Thorstein said: 'This is a matter for consideration, and I will go under the sod-slice.' Berg said that would do. The first sod-slice reached to the shoulder, the second to the waist-belt, the third to the middle of the thigh. When Thorstein went under the first, Berg said: 'Now I will make the foremost of the Vatnsdal-men stoop like a pig.' Thorstein answered: 'There was no need for thee to say this, but the first result of these words will be that I will not go under any more sod-slices'" (Vatnsdæla, c. 33).

The ordeal of boiling water was sometimes resorted to.

A bondwoman, Herkja, told Atli that she had seen King Thjodrek and Atli's wife, Gudrun, together. Gudrun asked Atli why he was no longer merry. He told her the cause of

his jealousy, and that she was unfaithful to him. She answers:—

"'I will take oaths
Before thee about all this
Upon the white[1]
Holy stone,
That I acted not
With Thjodrek
As husband and wife
Might do.

* * * *

'Send to Saxi,
The king of the southern men,
He can consecrate
The boiling cauldron.'
Seven hundred men[2]
Went into the hall
Before the king's wife
Touched the cauldron.

'Now Gunnar will not come,
I call not on Högni,[3]
I will never see
My kind brothers;
Högni would have avenged
Such a charge with the sword;
Now I must myself
Clear me of this.'

She dipped to the bottom[4]
Her white hand,
And took up
The costly stones;
'Look now, men,
I am guiltless
According to holy custom;
See how the cauldron boils.'

Merry was the heart
In the breast of Atli
When he saw the hand
Of Gudrun unharmed.
Now shall Herkja
Go to the cauldron,
She who to Gudrun
Attributed treachery.

The man saw not a pitiful sight
Who beheld not
How the hands of Herkja
Were scalded there;
They led the maid
Into a foul mire;[5]
Thus were the wrongs
Of Gudrun redressed."

(3rd Song of Gudrun.)

The severest ordeal resorted to seems to have been that of walking on red-hot irons.

"Hallkel Huk, a lend-man in Norway, went westward to the Hebrides; there Gilli-Krist came to him from Ireland, and said that he was the son of King Magnus Berfœtti (bare-foot). His mother was with him, and said that he was also called Harald. Hallkel received them, took them with him to Norway, and at once went to King Sigurd with Harald and his mother. They told the king their errand. Sigurd talked of this matter with the chiefs, and said that every one might advise what he liked, but all asked him to have his own

[1] In the second song of Helgi, stanza 31, an oath upon a stone is mentioned; these holy stones may have meant *hörgs*.

[2] This shows the large size of some of the halls.

[3] Her brothers.

[4] From stanza 2 we see that the kettle was consecrated. Stanza 5 shows the accuser had to go through the ordeal also.

[5] They drowned her in a mire.

way. Then Sigurd let Harald be called, and told him that he would allow him to undergo the ordeal to prove who was his father. Sigurd said that Harald should walk on iron bars to prove his fathership; but that ordeal was thought to be rather hard, for he had to suffer it for the sake of his fathership and not for his kingship, which he had before renounced by oath. Harald assented to this. He fasted before he walked on the irons and suffered the ordeal, the severest in Norway, that nine 'red-hot' ploughshares were to be laid down, and Harald to walk over them with bare feet, and two bishops to lead him. Three days afterwards the ordeal was tried, and the result was that his feet were not burnt. Thereafter Sigurd acknowledged the kinsmanship of Harald; but his son Magnus disliked him much, as did many chiefs. Sigurd trusted so much to his popularity with the people that he asked all to swear that Magnus, the son of Sigurd, should be king after him, and he got that oath from all the people of the land" (Sigurd Jórsalafari's Saga, c. 34).

CHAPTER XLII.

DUELLING.

Two forms of duelling—The challenge—The places of combat—Rules of duelling—Plan of duelling-ground—Length of sword used—Offer of sacrifice before a duel—A peculiar duel—Women a constant cause of duels—Famous duels—The abolition of duelling.

THE custom of duelling, which was frequently resorted to as a form of ordeal, prevailed very extensively.

There were two kinds of duels, the *einvigi* and the *holmganga*. When used as a form of ordeal, or means of proof, if the challenger was victorious, then the object demanded was his, for his victory was thought to be the judgment of the gods.

"It was the law of *holmganga* in those times, that if he who challenged another man in order to get something gained the victory, he should have the prize for which he had challenged; but if he was defeated, he should release himself with as much property as had been agreed upon; but if he fell in the *holmganga* he should forfeit all his property, and he who killed him was to take all the inheritance" (Egil's Saga, c. 67).

In the *einvigi*[1] there were no settled rules, and each party could use such weapons as he wished, and proceed in such manner as he thought most advantageous to himself. It was the simpler mode of duelling. One of its peculiarities was that the place for the fight was marked out. The combatants were allowed to use other weapons besides swords, and themselves carried the shield, while in the *holmganga* it was carried for them.

The *holmganga*, which took place after a formal challenge at which the time and place were fixed, was the form of duelling that chiefly prevailed. Its rules were most strict and binding,

[1] Einvigi Kormak, c. 10.

and were regulated by a code of law called the "*holmganga laws.*"

It derived its name from the fact that the combatants originally fought upon a small islet (*holm*), partly in order that they might not be disturbed and parted against their will, and partly that the fighting place might have a natural border, over which they could not retire.

In later times, instead of an island, places were marked out for duels; and though they were sometimes marked by stones in a ring, like a *dom-ring*, they were nevertheless called "*holm*," because the laws of *holmganga* prevented any one from passing the boundary.

The laws of duelling seem to have been recited before the combat. Björn Hitdœlakappi said:—

"'I left my country because I wanted to seek fame; there are now two choices before me: the one to bravely get victory, though that is unlikely, in fighting against this man; the other is to fall with valour like a man, and that is better than to live in shame and not dare to win honour for the king. I will fight against Kaldimar.' The king thanked him, and the laws of the *holmganga* were read. The champion had an excellent sword called *Mœring*. They fought hard and eagerly; at last the champion fell, but Björn received a severe wound; on this account he got great fame and honour from the king" (Björn Hitdœlakappi's Saga).

The combatants had sometimes to fight on a cloak, and were allowed to use three shields, in case of these being cut asunder, one after the other. They usually did not themselves carry the shield, each combatant having a friend to hold it, who was called *skjaldsvein* (shield man). Swords of a certain length only were allowed, and it seems that they were used for striking, not thrusting.

"A cloak was spread under their feet. Bersi said, 'Thou, Kormak, didst challenge me to holmganga, but instead of it I offer thee *einvigi* (single-fight). Thou art young and little experienced, and at *holmganga* there are difficult rules, but none whatever at *einvigi*.' Kormak answered, 'I shall not fight better in *einvigi*, and I will risk this, and in all be on equal footing with thee.' 'Thou shalt now have thy way,' said Bersi.

"This was the holmganga law: that the cloak should be 10 feet from one end to the other, with loops in the corners, and in these should be put down pegs, having a head at the upper end; these were called *tjösnur*. The one who made the preparations must go toward the pegs, hold his ear-lobes, and stand with his feet apart, seeing the sky between them, using the formulary which was afterwards used at the sacrifice called *Tjösnublót* (peg sacrifice). Three squares, each one foot wide, must be marked around the cloak. Outside the squares must be placed four poles, called *höslur* (hazel poles): it was called a *hazelled field* when it was prepared thus.

"Each man must have three shields, and when these were made useless he must stand upon the cloak, even if he had walked out of it before, and thereafter defend himself with his weapons.

"He who had been challenged was to strike first. If one was wounded so that blood came upon the cloak he was not obliged to fight any longer. If either stepped with one of his feet outside the hazel poles, it was held he had retreated; and if he stepped outside with both, he was held to have fled. One man was to hold the shield before each of the combatants. The one who had received most wounds was to pay as *hólmlausn* (*i.e.*, indemnity for being released from the fight) three marks of silver.

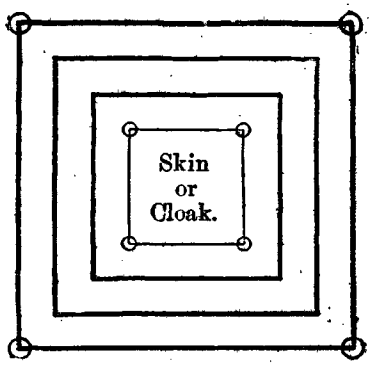

Fig. 780.—Plan of Holmganga Ground.

"Thorgils held the shield of his brother, and Thord Arndisarson that of Bersi, who struck the first blow and cleft Kormak's shield. Kormak struck at Bersi in the same way. Each of them spoiled three shields for the other. Then Kormak had to strike; he struck, and Bersi parried with *Hviting*. *Sköfnung* cut off its point in front of the ridge, and the sword-point fell on Kormak's hand, and he was wounded in the thumb, whose joint was rent, and blood came on the cloak. Thereupon men intervened, and did not want them to go on fighting. Kormak said, 'It is little victory which Bersi has got from my accident, though we part now'" (Kormak's Saga, c. 10).

"'But I think that thou tellest the difficulties in fighting me,' said Viking, 'and that thou despairest when thou seest me.' Harek said: 'It is not so, and I must save thy life, as

thou wantest thyself to go into the open mouth of death (hel); and give thou the first blow, as is *holmganga law*, for I have challenged thee; but I will stand still for thee meanwhile, for I am not frightened that it will harm me'" (Thorstein Vikingson's Saga, c. 4).

After getting ready, they went to the island.

"There was a fine field not far from the sea, where the *holmganga* was to be. There the place of the *holmganga* was marked by stones placed in a ring around it. Ljót came thither with his men, prepared for the *holmganga* with shield and sword. He was very large and strong, and when he arrived on the field at the holmgang-place the Berserk frenzy came upon him, and he howled fiercely and bit his shield.

"Egil made ready for the *holmganga*, having his old shield, and girt with the sword *Nadr*, with *Dragvandil* in his hand. He went inside the marks of the *duelling-place* (*i.e.*, the squares marked out round the cloak), but Ljót was not ready. Egil raised his sword and sang.

"After the song Ljót came forward and pronounced the law of the *holmganga*, that he who stepped beyond the mark-stones which are set around the place of *holmganga* should ever afterwards be called *nithing* (coward).

"Then they rushed at each other, and Egil struck at Ljót, who covered himself with the shield, while Egil dealt blow after blow so that Ljót could not strike him. He drew back to get room to wield his sword, but Egil went equally fast after him and smote most violently. Ljót went out beyond the mark-stones and to and fro on the field. Thus went the first attack. Then Ljót asked to be allowed to rest, which Egil granted. . . .[1]

"Egil bid Ljót to make himself ready. 'I want this fought out.' Ljót started to his feet, and Egil ran forward and at once struck at him. He went so close to him that he stepped back, and his shield did not cover him. Then Egil smote him above the knee, and cut off his leg. Ljót fell, and at once died" (Egil's Saga, c. 67).

The swords had to be of a certain length.

"Bersi had a shield, and a long keen sword. Thorkel said, 'The sword which thou wearest, Bersi, is longer than the laws allow.' 'It shall not be so,' said Bersi, and brandishing *Hviting* with both hands he struck Thorkel his death blow" (Kormak's Saga, c. 14).

[1] On Holmganga, Egil, 67.

Egil Skallagrimsson had summoned Atli before the *Gula-thing* to get some property belonging to his wife, which he claimed that Atli had. The latter offered to prove by the oath of himself and twelve other men that he had no property belonging to Egil. But Egil said he did not want to take the oath for his property, and added:

"I will offer thee another law to settle the case with, namely, that we fight in a *holmganga* here at the *Thing*, and he who gets the victory shall have this property. What Egil said was law and an ancient custom, that every one, whether he was defendant or plaintiff, had the right to challenge the other party to *holmganga*. Then Atli and Egil shook hands, and settled it between themselves that they should fight a *holmganga*, and he who got the victory should possess those estates about which they contended. It was the custom of duellers not to draw their sword on the place of *holmganga*, but let the sword hang on the arm, so that it was ready at once whenever they wanted it" (Egil's Saga, c. 57).

It seems to have been customary, after both kinds of duel, to offer sacrifice of one or two oxen, which the victor slaughtered.

"A large and old bull was led forward; it was called sacrifice-bull; he who got the victory was to kill it. Sometimes one bull was sacrificed; sometimes each of the combatants brought one" (Egil's Saga, c. 68).

There seems to have been a peculiar kind of holmganga called *Kerganga*, but the regulations concerning this mode of fighting are not explained.

Thorgils, an Icelander, dwelt at Hakon jarl's, in Norway.

"He went on a trading journey to Upplönd and Sweden and dwelt in the winter at the house of a bondi called Thrand, a wealthy man, who had a daughter, Sigrid. A man called Randvid wished to marry her; he was a wicked man, and a great champion. Thrand refused his consent to the marriage; then Randvid offered to Thrand a kind of holmganga, which is called *Kerganga* (tub-going). The fight takes place in a tub, which is closed above, and Thrand preferred to fight with a wooden club rather than marry his daughter to so wicked a man. Then Thorgils said to Thrand: 'Thou hast entertained me well, and I will reward it with good, and fight against

Randvid on thy behalf.' Thrand said he would accept the offer. Thorgils used the sword from the earth-house (underground house). Randvid had a stick two feet long, and very stout. The tub was closed. Randvid asked Thorgils to deal the first blow, because he had been challenged; he did so, and hit the stick, and it split, and the sword entered the belly of Randvid. He said then: 'Now give me the sword, but take the stick, and I will smite thee with the sword.' 'It seems to me,' replied Thorgils, 'that this is a chip, not a stick.' Soon after Randvid died; he had trusted in his witchcraft, for he had killed many a man by this kind of holmgang. Thorgils killed two other vikings, Snœkoll and Snœlejon. Thrand rewarded him well, and he became very famous for this deed. He made ready for Iceland the next summer" (Flóamanna Saga).

A man was often forced to give up his wife when another man challenged him to *holmganga*, and make the wife the prize of the victor. Many a man not feeling himself able to cope with the challenger, surrendered his wife and daughters or sisters to the latter. This acquisition by *holmganga* was undoubtedly considered quite legal, and could not be disputed except by a fresh *holmganga*.

Unn, the wife of Rút, had separated from her husband, but left her property with him, and got her kinsman, Gunnar of Hlidarendi, to prosecute her case. Rút named his witnesses, and said the case was quashed. Gunnar asked:

"Are you so near to me you brothers, Höskuld and Rút, that you can hear my words?' Rút answered: 'We can hear, but what dost thou want?' Gunnar said: 'The men here present shall be witnesses that I challenge thee, Rút, to *holmganga*, and we will fight to-day on the islet here in Oxará (Axe river); or, if thou wilt not fight, thou must give up all the property.' Then Gunnar sang a song .... Gunnar left the court with all his men, Höskuld and Rút also went home. The case was neither prosecuted nor defended thereafter. Rút said when he entered the booth: 'It has never happened to me before, that a man has challenged me to *holmganga* and I have declined it.' Höskuld said: 'Thou intendest to fight, but thou shalt not if I have my will, for there is as much difference between thee and Gunnar as between Mörd and thee; let us rather both together pay the property to Gunnar.' The brothers asked the bœndr how much they would contribute to it; they all answered as much

as Rút wanted. Höskuld added: 'Then let us go to the booth of Gunnar and give up the property.' They went to the booth and called Gunnar, who went out to the door of the booth. Höskuld said: 'Now receive the property.' Gunnar replied: 'Then give it up, for I am ready to receive it.' They made over all the property completely"[1] (Njala, c. 24).

"When they had fought a while Thorgils cut off the end of Svart's shield and his foot; but then it was law that men got the inheritance of the man who fell in a *holmganga*. Thereupon Thorgils cut off Svart's head and took all his ships and property" (Flóamanna Saga, c. 16).

One cause of constant duelling was a challenge given on account of women; and some men, especially Berserks, went about from place to place making duelling a profession. It was quite common for a maid who had several suitors to say that she would accept the one who should be victorious in a duel. This often resulted in the death of one or more of the combatants; and it appears that even fathers were sometimes challenged by the suitors.

"One winter there came to Vors (Voss) Thorstein, a kinsman of the brothers Ivar and Hreidar (with whom the Icelander Eyúlf was stopping), who owned a farm in Upplönd. He told his trouble, which was that a Berserk, Asgaut by name, had challenged him to *holmganga* because he refused to give his sister to him; he asked them to follow him with many men to the *holmganga*. They did not like to refuse, and went with thirty men to Upplönd and to the place where the meeting was to be. They asked their men if any one wanted to win a wife by *holmganga* against Asgaut; but, although they thought the woman fair, no one was ready to do this. The brothers asked Eyúlf to hold the shield before Thorstein. Eyúlf said he had done that for no one, not even for himself. 'I shall not be happy if he is slain on my hands' (*i.e.* while I hold the shield before him); 'there seems to me no fame in this. If the man is killed, shall we then go home, leaving matters thus, or get a second and a third champion? Our disgrace will increase the more, the more men of ours fall; and little honour will there be on our journey if we go back with Thorstein unavenged, if he falls. Rather ask of me to go into *holmganga* against the Berserk; that is helping one's friend, but the other I will not assist in.'

[1] Cf. also Gisli Sursson's Saga.

They thanked him, but, nevertheless, thought he risked too much. He added: 'It seems to me as if none of us would go back if he is not avenged, and that it would be worse to fight against the Berserk if your kinsman is first slain.' Thereupon he advanced, and Ivar offered to hold the shield before him. Eyúlf said: 'That is a generous offer; but I can best take care of it, and the old saying true is, "One's own hand is most faithful";' then he went to the place of the *holmganga.* The Berserk said: 'Will this fool fight against me?' Eyúlf replied: 'Is it not that thou art afraid to fight against me? It may be that thou art of such a cowardly disposition as to fear a large man, and braggest before a small one.' He answered, 'That is not true; but I will pronounce for the laws of *holmganga.* Six marks will absolve me from the *holm* if I get wounded.' Eyúlf added: 'I do not think it due to observe the laws towards thee when thou puttest a value on thyself, for in our land (Eyúlf was an Icelander) such a value as thou settest on thyself would be thought a thrall's value.' Eyúlf had to strike the first blow, and the sword struck the lower part of the shield and cut off it and the foot of the Berserk. Eyúlf got great fame from this deed, and thereupon went home with the brothers. Much property was offered to him, but he said he had not done this for the sake of property nor for the woman, but rather from friendship towards the brothers" (Vigaglum's Saga, c. 4).[1]

"It happened on Yule-evening that the men were to make vows there over the horn of Bragi. Then the sons of Arngrim made theirs. Hjorvard vowed that he would marry Ingibjörg, the daughter of Yngvi,[2] king of the Swedes, at Uppsalir, who was famous through all countries for her beauty and accomplishments, or else he would never marry. That same spring the brothers (Hjorvard and Angantyr) made the journey to Uppsalir, and went before the table of the king; his daughter sat at his side. Hjorvard told the king of his vow and his errand while all listened. Hjorvard asked him to say at once what answer he should receive. The king thought this matter over, knowing how valiant and high-born they were. At that moment Hjalmar Hugumstori (high-minded) stepped forward and said to the king: 'Recollect, lord, how much I have increased your honour since I came into this land; I have increased your realm so that it is twice as large; have defended it, brought into your possession the most costly things, and also placed my services at your free disposal; now, I beg of you to grant me honour and give me your daughter, on whom my mind has always been

[1] Cf. Svarfdæla Saga.

[2] Ingjald (another text).

bent. I deserve this better than the Berserk, who has only done evil in your realm and those of other kings.' The king thought it over with double care, and it seemed to him a perplexing matter that these two chiefs should strive so hard for his daughter. He answered that either of them was so great and high-born that he would refuse her to neither; he asked her to choose which of them she liked to marry. She said that if her father wanted her to marry she would marry the man of whom she knew good, and not the one of whom she knew only evil, as she had heard of the sons of Arngrim. When Hjorvard heard her words he challenged Hjalmar to single fight south in Samsey; he said he should be called *nithing* (coward) by every man if he married the maiden without accepting the challenge. Hjalmar said he was quite ready, and the time of the fight was at once appointed. The sons of Arngrim went home, and told their father the result of their errand, and of the challenge to the fight. Arngrim answered: 'Never have I been anxious about your journey before now, but nowhere know I of any match for Hjalmar in bravery and daring, or for the champion that follows him (Orvar Odd), who is only second to him in strength and valour.' They talked no more about it. Bjartmar, a jarl, ruled Aldeigjuburgh, a very powerful and famous warrior; he was a great friend of the sons of Arngrim, and they always had peace-land there. The brothers went to Bjartmar jarl, who at once made a great feast for them; at this Angantyr asked in marriage the jarl's daughter Svafa, and readily won her. The feast was made a wedding feast, which lasted half a month.

"When the feast was over the sons of Arngrim prepared for their journey to Samsey. The last night before they left, Angantyr had a dream, which he told to the jarl: 'It seemed to me we brothers were in Samsey, and found many birds there, and killed them all. Then we went to the other side of the island, and two eagles flew against us. I had a hard fight against one of them, and at last we both sat down. The other eagle fought against my brothers, and overcame them all.' The jarl answered: 'Such a dream needs no unravelling. The fall of some men is shown to you by this, and I think it concerns you.' They said they would not fear that. The jarl added: 'All men go when death calls upon them.' They spoke no more. When the feast was over the brothers went home, and Svafa remained with the jarl. They made themselves ready for the fight, and their father followed them to their ship, and gave good armour to them all. 'I think,' said he, 'there is need of good weapons now, for you fight against the most valiant champions.' Then they parted, and he bade

them farewell. They sailed to Samsey, and went to Munarvog (a bay).

"When they came upon the island Berserk-fury came over them; they wrestled with the trees as they were wont.

"It is told of Hjalmar that he landed with ships on the other side of Samsey, in the harbour Unavog. He had two ships, and both were called *ask;* one hundred very valiant men were on each of them. The brothers saw the ships, and knew that Hjalmar and Odd (the far-travelling, called Orvar-Odd) owned them. The sons of Arngrim drew their swords and bit the edges of their shields. They went to the ships, and six of them went on board each *ask;* so brave were the men on them that every one took his weapons, and no one fled from his place or spoke a word of fear. The Berserks went along the one side forwards and the other backwards, and slew every man. Then they went ashore howling. Hjorvard said: 'Our father Arngrim has become a fool from old age, as he told us that Hjalmar and Odd were the bravest champions, and now I saw no man fight better than the others.' Angantyr said: 'Let us not complain that we did not find our equals; it may be that Odd and Hjalmar are not yet dead.' Hjalmar and Odd had walked up on the island to see if the Berserks had come; when they came out of the forest the sons of Arngrim went on land from their ships with bloody weapons and drawn swords; the Berserk-fury was over, and they were less strong after it, as it were after an illness. Odd sang:

"'Then was (cause of) fear,
Once upon a time,
When they howling
Stepped from the *asks*,
And groaning
On the island stepped,
The inglorious ones,
Twelve together.'

"Hjalmar said: 'Thou seest that our men are slain, and it seems to me most likely that we shall all lodge with Odin in Valhöll to-night.' This was the only word of fear that Hjalmar ever spoke. Odd answered: 'I never saw such fiends, and it is my advice that we escape into the forest; we two shall not be able to fight the twelve, who have slain twelve of the bravest men in Svia realm.' Hjalmar said: 'Let us never flee from our foes, let us rather go under their weapons; I will go and fight the Berserks.' Odd said: 'I will not lodge with Odin to-night, and all these men will be dead ere evening comes, and we two shall live.' Hjalmar sang:

"'Valiant men
Go from the warships,
Twelve together,
Inglorious men;
To-night will we,
The two champions,
Lodge with Odin,
And the twelve will live.'

"Odd answered:

"'To these words
I will answer give;
The twelve Berserks
Will to-night
Lodge with Odin,
But we two live.'

"They saw that Angantyr had *Tyrfing* in his hand, for it glittered like a sunbeam. Hjalmar asked: 'Which wilt thou fight against, Angantyr alone or his eleven brothers?" Odd answered: 'I will fight Angantyr; he will give hard blows with *Tyrfing*, and I trust my shirt better than my brynja for shelter.' Hjalmar said: 'Have we been in any battle where thou wert in front of me; thou wishest to fight Angantyr because it seems to thee a greater feat; now, I am the principal in this duel, and also heir of the kingdom. Therefore I must have my will; it would be far from my promise to the king's daughter in Sweden, to let thee or another go to this single fight instead of me, and I will fight Angantyr.' Odd said he chose the worse alternative, but Hjalmar had his will. He drew his sword and walked towards Angantyr; one pointed to the other, the way to Valhöll. Angantyr said: 'If any one of us escapes hence no one shall take another's weapons; I want to have *Tyrfing* in my mound if I die; Odd shall have his shirt and Hjalmar his weapons; those who live shall make mounds over the other.' Then Hjalmar and Angantyr went against each other, and fought with the greatest violence; there was no need to urge on to attack or defence. They struck hard and often, and sank into the ground up to their knees. It was like a burning flame when the steels met; neither heeded anything except to strike as often as possible, and the ground shook on account of their fight as if it were trembling. They fought till their armour began to be cut through; then each gave the other many and large wounds. Their breath came forth from their nostrils and mouths so that they were like burning stoves. Odd said afterwards a more warrior-like fight or finer weapons than in that single fight would never be seen; it is also told in tales far and wide that few more famous or brave men have been found.

"When Odd and the others had looked on for a long time, they went to another place and made ready for fight. Odd said to the Berserks: 'I suppose you want to follow the custom of warriors, and not that of thralls; one of you, and no more, shall fight me at a time, if your courage fails not.' They consented. Then Hjorvard came forward. Odd went against him. Odd's sword was so good that it cut steel as if it were cloth. They began their fight with great blows, and before long Hjorvard sank dead to the ground. When the others

saw this they scowled horribly and gnawed the edges of their shields, and froth gushed out of their mouths. Hervard rose and attacked Odd; the same happened to him, he fell dead. At this the sorrow of the Berserks turned into rage; they stretched out their tongues and ground their teeth, roaring like mad bulls, so that the rocks resounded. Then Seming rushed forth; he was, next to Angantyr, the best of the eleven. He attacked Odd so fiercely that he could do no more than defend himself. They fought long, so that it could not be seen which would get the victory; all their armour was cut off, but Odd's shirt protected him so that he was not hurt. Seming received wounds, but nevertheless did not yield till nearly all his flesh was cut off his bones. Odd saw no spot on him which was not bloody. When all his blood had run out of his veins he fell down with great valour, and at once died. One rose after the other, but Odd at last slew them all; then he was excessively tired, but not wounded. He went to where Angantyr and Hjalmar had fought. Angantyr had fallen, and Hjalmar sat by a hillock, and was as pale as a corpse. Odd went to him and sang:

"'What ails thee, Hjalmar,
Thou hast changed colour?
I see that deep wounds
Weaken thee;
Thy helmet is cut,
And the mail-coat on thy side;
Now I think
Thy life is done.'

"Hjalmar sang:

"'I have sixteen wounds,
And a torn coat-of-mail;
It is dark before my eyes;
I cannot see to walk;
The sword of Angantyr
Touched my heart.
The sharp sword-point
Hardened in poison.

'I owned fully
Five bœrs together,
But I never
Enjoyed that occupation;
Now I must lie
Deprived of life,
Sundered with sword,
In Samsey.

'Very high-born men,
The Huskarls, drink
Mead in the hall,
At my father's;
The ale weakens.
Many men
While the cutting of swords
Pains me on the island.

'The tale will prove true
Which she[1] told me,
That I would not
Come back.

'Draw from my hand
The red ring,
And take it to the young
Ingibjörg.
It will be to her
A lasting sorrow
That I do not
Come back to Uppsalir.

[1] Ingibjörg.

'I left the fair
Song of women,
Though ready for pleasure;
I went east with Sóti;
I hurried my journey
And went into a host
The first time,
Away from my good friends.

'The women on land
Will not hear
That I sheltered
Myself from blows;
The wise maiden
In Sigtunir
Will not laugh
Because I gave way.
* * *
'I left the young
Ingibjörg;
We left her in haste
On that fated day;
It will be to the maiden
A deep sorrow
That she after this
Will never see me.

A raven flies from the east
From the high tree,
And after it
An eagle follows;
That is the last eagle
To which I give prey;
It will taste
My blood.

'Carry thou, to show
That is my will,
My helmet and mail-coat
Into the King's hall;
The mind of the King's daughter
Will be moved
When she sees the mail-coat
Cut on the breast.

'I see where they sit
In Sigtunir,
The maidens who held me
From leaving thence;
Ale or warriors
Ever more
Hjalmar will not cheer
In the King's hall.'"

(Hervarar Saga, c. 4 and 5.)

After the burial of the Berserks Odd leaves for Sweden.

"Thereafter Odd laid Hjalmar on the ship and sailed away. Then he used the *idrott* (skill, art) which had been given him, and hoisted sail in calm weather and sailed home to Sweden with the dead Hjalmar. He landed where he wished to land, and drew up his ship; he placed Hjalmar on his back, walked home to Uppsalir (Upsala) with him, and laid him down at the door of the hall. He went in with the mail-coat of Hjalmar, and also his helmet, and put them down on the floor in front of the king, and told him the tidings which had occurred. Then he went to where Ingibjörg sat in a chair, sewing a shirt for Hjalmar. Odd said: 'Here is a ring which Hjalmar sent thee on his death-day, and therewith his greeting.' She took the ring, looked at it, but answered nothing; she sank back between the chair-posts and died at once. Odd burst into loud laughter, and said, 'Nothing better has occurred for a long time, and I welcome it; now they will enjoy each other dead, which they could not alive.' Odd took her and carried her with his hands, and laid her in the arms of

Hjalmar at the door of the hall, and sent in for the king and told him to look how he had arranged her. Thereafter the king welcomed Odd, and seated him in the high seat at his side. When Odd had rested himself the king said he wanted to make an *arvel*[1] after Hjalmar and Ingibjörg, and raise a mound over them. The king let everything be done as Odd ordered. The helmet and mail-coat of Hjalmar were brought forward, and the men praised his deeds highly, and told how hard it had been to slay him; they were both placed in one mound, and all went to see this great mound, for Odd had it made with much honour. He remained quiet that winter with King Hlodver, who in the autumn gave him men and ten ships, and he went in the summer to seek Ögmund Eythjofsbani again, but found him not" (Orvar Odd's Saga, c. 14).

In the time of King Knut duelling was abolished in Norway, and robbers and Berserks were outlawed.

"The last summer before the one when Eirik jarl, Hakonsson, made ready to go west to England to visit King Knut the Great, his brother-in-law, he placed his son Hakon as ruler over Norway, and gave him into the hands of his own brother Svein jarl to look after and govern for him, because Hakon was a child in age. Before Eirik jarl left, he summoned to him the chiefs and powerful bœndr; they talked much about the laws and customs of the land, for Eirik jarl was a wise ruler. The men thought it a great barbarity in the land, that rioters or Berserks challenged high-born men for the sake of their property or women, and that the one who fell should have no indemnity paid for his slaying; many suffered disgrace and loss of property, and some lost their life; therefore Eirik jarl abolished all *holmgangas* in Norway, and outlawed all robbers and Berserks who went about plundering" (Gretti's Saga, c. 19).

"In the summer a throng of men rode to the Thing—Illugi the Black and his sons Gunnlaug and Hermund, Thorstein Egilsson and his son Kollsvein, Önund from Mosfell with all his sons, and Sverting Hafr-Bjarnarson. One day when a crowd went to the *lögberg* (law-hill) and the law cases were ended, Gunnlaug asked for a hearing, and said, 'Is Hrafn Önundsson here?' He said he was. Gunnlaug Ormstúnga then added: 'Thou knowest that thou hast got my betrothed, and that thou hast shown enmity towards me; on that account I will summon thee to *holmganga* after three days' time on Öxarár-

[1] Inheritance feast. See Vol. II., p. 47.

holm' (an islet in the Axe-river (Öxará)). Hrafn replied: 'This is well offered, as was to be expected from thee, and I am ready when thou wishest.' This the kinsmen of both thought lamentable, but it nevertheless was the law in that time to bid to *holmganga* the person by whom a man thought himself wronged. After three nights they made ready for the *holmganga*, and Illugi the Black followed his son to the place with very many men, but Skapti (lawman) followed Hrafn and his father and other kinsmen. . . . Hermund held the shield before his brother Gunnlaug, and Sverting Hafr-Bjarnarson that before Hrafn. The one who first got wounded had to redeem himself from the holmganga with three marks of silver. Hrafn had the first blow, for he was the challenged one, and he cut into the top of Gunnlaug's shield, and his sword broke at the guards, as the blow was given with great force. The sword-point rebounded from the shield, and struck Gunnlaug on the cheek, and he was a little hurt. Both their fathers and many others stepped between them. Gunnlaug said, 'I claim that Hrafn is defeated, for he is weaponless.' Hrafn replied, 'And I claim that thou art beaten, for thou art wounded.' Gunnlaug at this grew very angry, and cried that this was not fought out. His father Illugi would allow them to fight no more at that time. Gunnlaug added that next time when he and Hrafn were to meet he hoped his father would be too far away to part them. After this they separated, and the men went back to their booths. On the following day a law was enacted at the law-court (of the Thing) that thenceforth all holmgangas should be abolished; this was done at the advice of the wisest men in the land who were there present" (Gunnlaug Ormstunga).

CHAPTER XLIII.

OUTLAWRY.

Irredeemable crimes—Outlaws regarded as enemies of society—Custom of pleading for an outlaw—Liabilities of a murderess—Substitution of corporal punishment and fines for outlawry—Purchase of an outlaw's peace.

THE laws did not aspire to improve the moral condition of the criminal and try to make him a better man, except through fear of punishment; their object in early days was to prevent private revenge, and stop people taking matters into their own hands. Crimes against personal rights or those of property were punished by fines as indemnity to the injured. By paying an indemnity the criminal released himself from the revenge of the injured and of his family, or from the outlawry which his conduct or crime had brought upon him.

If any man had wronged another he was placed outside the pale of the law until the weregild was paid; and if he or his family could not pay he was outlawed, and the outlawry was declared at all the Things in the country.[1]

There were crimes called *Ubota-mal* (irredeemable crimes), that is, for which no weregild could be paid; they were punished by outlawry and loss of all property, including the odal, which was the greatest punishment that could be inflicted. Such crimes were the violation of the sanctity of the temple or of the Thing-place, and secret or unprovoked murder. From the old laws of Norway we find that a man was called *Ubota-man* who could not redeem himself.

1. "If a man attacks another in his house and breaks the house and slays him, that is called *nithing-slaying*. 2. It is a *nithing-slaying* if a man slays the one to whom he has given

[1] Cf. Sigurd Jórsalafari, Heimskringla, c. 20–21.

his plighted faith. 3. It is also a *nithing-slaying* if a man slays another during a truce. 4. If a man strikes another against a stone, or a timber, or a stump. 5. To burn a man in his house. 6. To plunder the slain, or take away a man's clothes and weapons. 7. To murder a man. 8. To avenge thieves. These things must be denied with *séttareid.* Wherever a man commits a *nithing-slaying,* he is an unholy outlaw and forfeits every penny of his property, both land and movable property; he shall never come to the country, or the king, or the jarl, unless he brings true war-news (of a hostile host coming)" [1] (Gulath., 178).

Men could be slain with impunity, and were irredeemable if they were found guilty with the following women:—

"These women are seven (kinds). One's wife, then sister, thirdly daughter, fourthly mother, fifthly stepmother, sixthly brother's wife, seventhly son's wife. If a man finds a man with one of these, he may slay him if he likes; but he must tell the man whom he meets first of it, and why he did it" (Gulathing's Law, 160).

The following wording seems to imply that to slay a lawman under any circumstances, or run away with another man's wife were ubota crimes:—

"It is also a *nithing*-slaying if any one slays a lawman who is ordained to tell people the law. That man strikes down the rights of all men, for the lawman has duties to all, poor and rich, where he rules. . . . Men who are found to be so deceitful as to run away with other men's wives are *ubota-menn.*"

Such an outlaw was regarded as an enemy of society, and lost his personal security with regard to every one of its members; from the earliest times he was called *varg i véum* (wolf in the sanctuary), or *skógar-man* (forestman), so called probably because he was deprived of intercourse with mankind and left with the wild beasts of the forest, and could be killed by any one who saw him.

Grettir while in Norway had accidentally set fire to a house in which there were some Icelanders who had been

[1] From the last paragraph we see that announcing a hostile invasion of one's country was a redeemable case.

drinking, and therefore probably could not get out, and so were burned.

"That same summer there came a ship to Gasar, before the opening of the Althing. News was brought of the journeys of Grettir, and the burning of the house. Thorir of Gard became exceedingly angry at this, and thought that he ought to avenge his sons. He went to the Althing with many men, and there presented the case of the burning; but they were unwilling to do anything, because nobody was there to answer. Thorir said he would accept nothing but Grettir's outlawry from Iceland for such an evil deed. Skapti the lawman answered: 'It is certainly a wicked deed, if the news is true; but a tale is always half told if only one man tells it, for most men are willing to take the worst side of a question if there are two, therefore as matters stand I will not decide that Grettir shall be outlawed for this.' Thorir had great power in his Herad and was a great chief, and friendly with many great men; he pressed the case hard, and no one appeared in Grettir's defence. Thorir then had Grettir outlawed from the land, and was afterwards the most dangerous of all his foes, as was often seen. He at once put a price on his head, as was done with other outlaws, and rode home. Many said that this had been effected more by power than according to law, but the case stood as it had just been settled" (Gretti's Saga, c. 46).[1]

This seems to indicate that it was customary for some one to plead on an outlaw's behalf, for it is said in the Saga that "Skapti died, when Grettir had been outlawed nineteen years, so that then there was no one to plead his cause." His friends, however, brought his case before the Althing, and the judge decided that a man could not be an outlaw for more than twenty winters, even if during that time he committed some new crime; but that before that time expired the sentence could not be revoked.

"That summer the kinsmen of Grettir spoke much of his outlawry at the Althing, and some thought that he had served his time, as he had been outlawed now a part of the twentieth year; but those who had charges to bring against him did not like this, and said he had committed many deeds since

[1] Cf. also Gretti's Saga, c. 16.

for which he ought to be outlawed, and therefore his outlawry ought to last longer. At this time Stein Thorgestson was chosen lawman. He was a wise man, he was asked to give his decision. He enquired if the time of the summer thus far passed belonged to the last twelve months of the twenty years since he had been outlawed. As it was, Thorir from Gard tried to raise all the objections he could, and found that Grettir came to Iceland when a part of the summer had passed, and had not been an outlaw during that time. Nineteen twelvemonths, less the three months that passed from that Althing until Grettir came to Iceland in the autumn, had his outlawry lasted. Then the lawman said that no man should be an outlaw longer than twenty winters, even though during that time he committed deeds for which he ought to be outlawed; but that before twenty winters passed he would not declare any one free from his outlawry" (Gretti's Saga, c. 79).

The liabilities of a woman who committed murder were different according to the Gulathing or the Frostathing Law.

"If a woman slays a man, the kinsmen of the dead, if they wish, may slay her, if she does not go away in five days during summer, and in half a month during winter" (Frostath., iv. 33).

"If a man slays a woman he is outlawed, just as if he had slain a man. But if a woman slays a man she is outlawed, and her kinsmen shall send her out of the country; and also if a pauper[1] slays a man he shall be sent out of the country within five days, and he may stay with his kinsmen five nights if no necessity delays him longer. If he stays longer he shall pay forty marks, or deny it with *lyritareid*" (Gulath., 159).

Sigmund and Eylif, sons of Önund, wanted to get rid of a man called Örn, their kinsman. Mörd Gigja advised them to get him outlawed, and in that way get him from the Herad.

"They raised against Örn a suit about the right of grazing and it was agreed that Örn should be slain as unholy, and have no weregild anywhere, except at Valugerdi (his farm) and within an arrow-shot from his land. They continually tried to get at him, but he kept well on his guard. One day when he was driving oxen from his land they came upon him and slew

[1] Or any one under fifteen years of age.

him, and it was thought that his death was unholy. Hamund Gunnarsson and Thorleif led the prosecution in Örn's case, while Mörd supported the brothers; they paid no fine, but were outlawed from the Herad" (Landnáma, v., c. 4).

Another kind of outlawry (*Utlegdarmal*) was less severe, and did not imply the confiscation of property, for the outlaw could redeem himself by paying weregild. To this second class belonged a great many crimes, the principal of which were: simple slaying,[1] severe wounds, crimes against honour, bodily ill-treatment, crimes against personal liberty, robbery, &c.

In some cases corporal punishment, and occasionally fines, were substituted for outlawry.[2]

If a man killed another and failed to cover the body with earth he was outlawed.

Helgi Droplaugarson slew Björn, because he visited Thórdis, a kinswoman of Helgi's, too often.

"The following night Helgi Sveinung and the two others went to a skerry (rock) lying off the shore and removed Björn thither and covered his corpse. The widow of Björn thought there would be a prosecution by Helgi Ásbjarnarson and sent men to him at Mjófanes (her place). In this spring after Björn's death, this chief sent to Borgarfjord to prepare the case, and did not find the corpse of Björn.

"Then Helgi Ásbjarnarson (a godi) summoned Helgi Droplaugarson because he had murdered a man, thrown him into the sea, and not covered him with mould. Helgi summoned him at the Thing for greater outlawry. He had prepared the case of seduction for the Althing. Both cases came to the Thing. Helgi Droplaugarson went to the court with many men; he called witnesses to prove that Helgi Ásbjarnarson had no case, and said that three men had seen Björn covered with mould; then Sveinung and two others took oath at the altar-ring that they saw Björn covered with mould. Now the case of Helgi Ásbjarnarson was made void. Then Helgi Droplaugarson wanted to make Björn unholy, but Helgi Ásbjarnarson offered property and then Helgi Droplaugarson arbitrated, and he decided that 100 aurar should be paid" (Droplaugarsona Saga, p. 15, 16).

[1] I.e. Slaying which was not done in secret or against plighted faith or skill.

[2] N. G. L., i. 122, 265.

If a man was outlawed he had to buy his peace, "*fridkaup*," from the king, who determined what the amount should be.

"Now it may happen that the king permits the outlaw to stay in the land at the entreaties of chiefs, or in some other way. Then he (the outlaw) must buy peace with the king according to his mercy (the price paid by the outlaw to stay in peace in the country is determined by the king), and pay that half of his fine which is unpaid with sale-meetings (auctions), of the kind that men of good sense see that he is well able to hold. If he is not willing to pay, the kinsmen of the dead may take revenge on him, even though he be reconciled (in peace) with the king, and they will not be outlawed though they slay him. But those who took care of his property while he was an outlaw must pay him back as much as they received in lands and movables, and the rent of the land besides" (Frostathing's Law, Introd. 5).

CHAPTER XLIV.

REVENGE.

The duty of the nearest relative—Procedure—Blood-nights—Secret slaying—Incitement to revenge by women—Intentional wounding—Arbitration—Manslaughter—Murder by lunatics—Insults—Punishment of derision.

REVENGE played a conspicuous part in the daily life of the Norsemen, and it was the duty of the nearest relative to avenge the death of a kinsman. This duty first belonged to the brother of the deceased, and, if he had no brother, to his next of kin. Relatives as far as the fourth degree were obliged, if there was no one nearer, to undertake the duty. If the relative could not find the murderer, his revenge fell upon the innocent kinsman of the murderer, or upon the servants of the latter.

Procedure depended on the nature of the case. If a man was slain in his own Herad, his wife or heir, or the nearest of kin present in the Herad, the same day that the death became known sent out an arrow from farm to farm through the Herad to summon the bœndr. The summons ordered them to meet the same day, or, if it was already late, the next day, at the place of murder, to attend the Arrow-thing. At the Arrow-thing those more especially had to appear to whom the murderer had announced the slaying, with his name and residence; those assembled examined the circumstances of the slaying, and what was practically a coroner's inquest took place.

"Thither came nine bœndr who lived next to the slaying-place. Mörd (who caused the slaying and declared it) had ten men with him. He showed to the bœndr the wounds of Höskuld, and named witnesses to the wounds, and one to every wound except one. He feigned not to know who had given it, for he had given it himself. He declared that Skarphedin had slain him, and that his brothers and Kari had given the

wounds. Then he summoned the nine neighbours of the slaying-place to come to the Althing, then he rode home" (Njala, 112).

The days and nights immediately following a murder were called *blood-nights.*

Hrolleif, the son of a witchcraft-knowing woman, slew the chief Ingimund. When he came home and told his mother what he had done, she said:

"'It is my advice that thou goest away, for the blood-nights are the quickest for revenge'"[1] (Vatnsdæla, c. 24).

"Glum went out one day to slay Sigmund; he put on the blue cloak, and had a spear in his hand, ornamented with gold. When he had killed him he rode off to his brother Thorstein, who, seeing blood on the inlaid ornaments of the weapon, asked if he had struck anyone with it just before. Glum said: 'It is true, I forgot to tell thee that I have slain Sigmund Thorkelsson to-day.' Thorstein answered: 'That will be bad tidings to Thorkel (Sigmund's father) and the Esphol men, his sons-in-law.' Glum added: 'It is an old saying, that during the blood-nights every one is most passionate; but they will think little of it as time passes'" (Viga Glum's Saga, c. 8).

If at least twenty-seven bœndr had come to the Thing, and the nearest kinsman of the murdered man was present, and the slayer himself, after having received truce (*grid*), appeared, or it was stated that although the arrow had reached him he did not desire to appear, the Arrow-thing possessed the right to at once render judgment in the case.

The fifth day the prosecution took place at the *Fimtarthing*, which was an extraordinary *Heradsthing.*

To this Thing the slayer, or the person accused of the murder, was summoned, and here the case was carried to completion, and judgment given by the Thingsmen.

If the slaying was murder, and there was no certainty as to the murderer, then the next of kin could require three persons, on whom his suspicions had fallen, to free themselves one after the other, by *tylftareid* (an oath of suspicion).

"If the king accuses a man of land-treason (high-treason),

[1] Gulath., 132.

he must repel the charge by a tylftareid. Charge of murder and of breach of faith must also be repelled in this way. Six men, equal to him (the accused) in rétt, shall be summoned on both sides of him, two of them selected, then two of his nearest kinsmen, himself as the fifth, and seven fangavattar (witnesses summoned at random)" (Gulathing's Law, 132).

"Further, if thou findest a man slain out on the field, thou shalt hide the body and tell the first man whom thou meetest, and then go to his heir if he is in the Fylki; else thou shalt cut a Thing-summons and call a Thing. The man that does not come to the Thing is fined six aurar, called the large Thing-fine, and proves himself to be the slayer if the heir wants to accuse him of it" (Gulath., 161).

If a reconciliation took place between the slayer and family of the slain, the nearest of kin to the slain at once assured the slayer of intermediate truce (*grid*), and later, when the indemnity was paid, which generally took place in several instalments, assured him of security (*tryggdir*), whereby the matter was regarded as completely settled.[1]

If the slayer left the weapon in the wound of his foe his act was not considered murder, but only a lesser crime, termed "secret slaying."

"One morning, just before day-light, while Véstein was still in bed, some one entered the room, thrust a spear through his breast, and went out again. When Véstein tried to rise he fell dead. His sister Aud called upon a thrall of hers, Thord the faint-hearted, and bade him take the weapon from the wound. It was the custom for the man who pulled the weapon from a wound to be obliged to avenge the slain; but it was called secret slaying, and not murder, if the slayer left the weapon remaining in the wound" (Gisli Sursson's Saga).

To slay a man for revenge at night, or to put any one to death at night, was considered murder.

"King Olaf sat down in his seat when the room had been prepared, and was very angry. He asked where the slayer was. He was told that he was guarded out on the balcony. The king said: 'Why is he not slain?' Thorarin Nefjulfsson answered: 'My lord, do you not call it a murder to slay men

[1] Cf. Færeyinga Saga, c. 4, 5; Njala, 36, 122; Heidarviga Saga, c. 22; Björn Hítdœlakappi; St. Olaf's Saga, 126, 132; Egil's Saga, c. 24, 59, 60; Viga Styr, 4. N. G. L., i. 56, 60, 159, 167, 178.

at night?' Then the king said: 'Put him into fetters, and slay him to-morrow'" (St. Olaf's Saga, c. 126).

"Then Arinbjörn said: 'The king will not let himself be incited to all thy nithing-deeds. He will not let Egil be killed this night, because night-killings are murders.' The king replied: 'It shall be as thou askest, Arinbjörn, that Egil shall live this night'" (Egil's Saga, c. 62).

Incitement to revenge was often given by women. Thorbjörg, the wife of Indridi, heard that her brother Hörd had been treacherously slain by Thorstein Gullknapp.

"When she and her husband came into their bed in the evening, Thorbjörg drew a sax and thrust it at Indridi; but he parried the blow with his hand and got much wounded. He said: 'Thorbjörg, it is difficult to know what to do, and thou art very hard upon me. What shall I do that we may become friends again?' 'Thou canst do nothing but fetch the head of Thorstein Gullknapp for me'" (Hörd's Saga, c. 37).

To him who performed *nabjargir* (ceremony attending the dead) belonged the duty of avenging the dead.

Höskuld, a son of Njal by his concubine Hródný, was found wounded with sixteen wounds. Hródný laid him against the wall in Njal's sheephouse and went in to Njal's bed, as it was night.

"She asked if Njal was awake. He answered: 'I have slept, but now I am awake. Why art thou here so early?' Hródný replied: 'Rise from the bed of my rival and go out with me, and also thy wife and thy sons.' They rose and went out. Skarphedin said: 'Let us take our weapons with us.' Njal did not speak, and they ran in and fetched their weapons. Hródný walked on in front, and when they came to the sheephouse she went in and asked them to follow. She took up a lantern and said: 'Here, Njal, is thy son Höskuld with many wounds on him, and he needs to be healed.' Njal answered: 'I see death-marks on him, and no life-marks; why hast thou not given him nabjargir, as his nostrils are open?' 'I intended Skarphedin to do that,' she answered. Skarphedin walked up to Höskuld's body and closed the nostrils, eyes, and mouth. Then he asked his father, 'Who, sayest thou, is the slayer?' Njal answered: 'Lýting of Samstadir and his brothers have probably slain him.' Hródný said: 'I give it into thy hands, Skarphedin, to revenge thy brother; and I expect thee to behave well and perform the greatest part (in the revenge),

though he was not legitimate.' Bergthóra (Njal's wife) said: 'It is strange that you slay men for slight reasons, while you ponder over and digest this matter until nothing comes of it; Höskuld Hvitanesgodi will soon be here and ask you to come to terms, and you will grant him them; if you intend to do anything, do it now.' Skarphedin said: 'Now our mother incites us with lawful provocation'" (Njala, c. 98).

Then follows in the Saga a long account of how the two brothers of Lýting were killed, and how he himself was wounded and escaped. Lýting went to a man called Höskuld, who was a godi, and asked him to reconcile him with Njal and his sons. Höskuld consented, and went with him to Njal's home.

If a man intentionally wounded an innocent man, or offended him in such a way that full rétt was due to him, the offended could slay him if he had not offered surety.

It was not uncommon to resort to arbitration when cases of revenge occurred for which weregild would have to be paid.

Gunnar of Hlidarendi, the famous champion, with his brother Kolskegg had slain eight men. After the prosecution of the case had begun at the Althing, some proposed that good men should arbitrate.

"It was determined, according to the advice of the wisest men, that all the suits which followed should be submitted to arbitration; six men to arbitrate, and it was done at once at the Althing. It was decided that the death of Skamkel should not be paid for, the wound of the spur making up for the wergild; for the other a befitting payment was made. The kinsmen of Gunnar gave property, so that all the weregilds were at once paid at the Althing" (Njala, c. 56).

Manslaughter was murder if it was not acknowledged by the slayer; if there was no witness to the deed, he had to acknowledge it at the farm nearest to the place of slaughter, and tell his name and home. If kinsmen of the slain were present, he might pass the place; but in no case could he go further than the third farm without declaring it.

"Further, if men meet at the crossing of roads, and the one slays the other, and the man is alive when people come to him, then he is the slayer whom the man declares to be, unless the *great evidence* help him. If another man declares himself to

be the slayer, then they are both slayers, though there is only one wound on the dead man. When a man declares the slaying lawfully, he goes from the place in whatever direction he likes, and declares it at the next house, unless kinsmen on male or female side or near relatives of the dead are there; in this case he shall pass on to the next house, unless they (kinsmen) are also there; then he shall go to the third house and declare it, whoever are in it. He is neither called Ulf (wolf), nor Björn (bear), unless it be his name. He shall tell the *jartegn* (by which he is known), and tell where he slept last night. At the Arrowthing evidence of the declaration of the slaying shall be given" (Gulathing's Law, 61).[1]

If a man acknowledged a slaughter lawfully, and also in the presence of witnesses gave surety that he would pay weregild and *thegngildi* (weregild for a thegn), he thereby made himself holy and sacred, so that he could not be slain.

"If a man wounds an innocent man, or injures him publicly by deeds liable to full rétt, and revenge is taken by the man or his kinsmen before a lawful offer with full surety has been made, then the one who first broke the peace is outlawed, whether he has been slain or outraged in other ways, unless the king and other men of good sense think otherwise. But if he offers full surety he is peace-holy, and the one who slays him is outlawed" (Frostath., Introd. 6).

An insane man who committed murder, though not accounted responsible for his actions, was expelled the country.

"If a man becomes mad so that he breaks his chains and kills a man, he shall leave the land, and have all his property in half a month's truce during summer, and one month during winter" (Frostath.).

"If a father becomes so mad that he slays his son, or a son slays his father, or a brother his brother, he shall be outlawed, and leave the land, and never come back again" (Frostath., iv. 31).

Among the insults which were most resented were those caused by "*nid*," or derision. Derision was of two kinds: the first called "*tungunid*," tongue derision; that is, derisive or

[1] Cf. also Kormak's Saga, c. 16.

mocking words, which were chiefly in songs and lampoons (nidvisur), which sometimes were also thought to possess magical power, thus scaring away the guardian spirits, and bringing misfortune on the person in question. The second were *trenid* (wooden derision), that is, derisive images carved or traced on wood. These were placed at spots where they would draw attention, generally on the grounds of the enemy; and some of them must have corresponded to the caricatures of our own times.

These derisive songs were so much resented that Harald Gormson, King of Denmark, intended to go to Iceland to take revenge upon the people for a derisive song which had been made upon him by an Icelander.

"Harald Gormsson King of Denmark heard that Hakon jarl had cast away Christianity, and made warfare in many places in his lands. Then he levied a host and went to Norway, and when he came into the realm of Hakon he plundered there, and devastated the country, and went with his host to the islands called Solundir. Only five farms were left in Laradal, and all the people fled to the mountains and forests with all the loose property they could take with them. Then he wanted to sail[1] to Iceland, to take revenge for the derision (nid) which all the Icelanders had made on him. The Icelanders had enacted a law that as many nid-songs (derisive songs) should be made about the King of Denmark as there were noses (heads, men) in the country. The reason for this was that a ship owned by Icelanders had been wrecked in Denmark, and all the property on board taken by the Danes, who called it wreckage; this was done by the king's steward Birgir, and the derision was on both of them"[2] (Olaf Tryggvason's Saga, c. 36).

Derision was forbidden by law, and punished by outlawry.

"No man shall make tongue-nid (derision) on another, nor wood-nid (nid carved on wood). If it be known and proved that he has done this, he is liable to outlawry; he shall redeem the offence with an oath of reconciliation; he falls as an outlaw if he is slain. No man shall make exaggeration or

[1] The text of Fornmannasögur says that he had 1200 ships.

[2] In the song, which is very coarse, it is said that the king and Birgir were like stallion and mare. Cf. Vatnsdæla Saga, c. 33. Björn Hitdœlakappi's Saga.

slander about another: that is exaggeration if a man says about another what cannot take place, or will not, or has not, saying he is a woman every ninth night, and has borne a child, and calls him *gylvin* (she-wolf). He is an outlaw, if it is proved; he shall redeem the offence with an oath of reconciliation; he falls as an outlaw if he is slain" (Earlier Gulathing's Law, 138).

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